CLERMONT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT
OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

ADOPTION POLICIES

Revised: 9/1/17
Introduction

As permanency is paramount in the life of a child, adoption is the preferred plan offering the most stability to a child after all reunification efforts have been exhausted based upon current State and Federal regulations.

The purpose of these policies is to establish nondiscriminatory procedures for the matching and placement of children awaiting adoption with approved adoptive families.


The Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services also assures that all recruitment activities and materials are in compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA), Title VI, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq., and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.
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  - Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services Standards of Conduct
  - JFS 1611 “Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements”
Inquiry
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-08

(A) CCDJFS shall maintain a log of inquiries from persons interested in being adoptive parents. The agency shall document in the log any follow-up for each inquiry.

(B) If the inquirer resides in Ohio, CCDJFS shall provide the following to the inquirer within seven business days of the inquiry:

   (1) A copy of the JFS 01675 "Ohio Adoption Guide: Handbook for Prospective Adoptive Families" (rev. 5/2014) or the link to access the guide electronically.

   (2) Instructions on how to get an application for adoption.

   (3) A copy of CCDJFS' adoption policy, or summary of the policy, prepared pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.

(C) If the inquirer resides out of state and has an approved homestudy, CCDJFS shall send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675, or the link to access the guide electronically. If the family has identified a child they are interested in, the family should be given the telephone number to the custodial agency. This information shall be provided to the inquirer within seven business days of the inquiry.

(D) If the inquirer resides out of state and does not have an approved homestudy, CCDJFS shall send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675, or the link to access the guide electronically. CCDJFS shall also inform the inquirer that they will need a completed and approved homestudy from their state of residence in order to adopt an Ohio child. This information shall be provided to the inquirer within seven business days of the inquiry.

(E) When CCDJFS receives an inquiry from an Ohio resident, who does not meet requirements for adoption services as identified in the agency's adoption policy, CCDJFS shall refer the inquirer to another agency for adoption services. If the inquirer resides outside an area served by CCDJFS, the referral shall include, at a minimum, the name, address and telephone number of the PCSA in the county of the inquirer's residence. This information shall be given to the inquirer within seven business days of the inquiry.

(F) CCDJFS shall maintain requirements of this rule in SACWIS if the system has the ability to record the required information.

Effective: 9/1/15
The Geographic Area Within Which CCDJFS Conducts Adoption Homestudy Assessments for Families
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (1)

The Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services will conduct adoption homestudy assessments for families who express a desire to adopt Ohio’s waiting children and who reside in Clermont or surrounding Southwestern Ohio counties.

Effective: 8/1/17
Application Process and Preservice Training
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (2) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (B) (13), (B)(16), 5101:2-48-09

(A) CCDJFS shall:

(1) Inform all individuals applying for approval for adoptive placement that they can also be studied for foster home certification.

(2) Conduct a joint homestudy pursuant to the requirements contained in rule 5101:2-5-20 of the Administrative Code which can result in the simultaneous approval of the applicant for:

   (a) Adoptive placement.

   (b) Foster care placement.

(B) CCDJFS shall utilize the JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014) as the standard form when accepting applications for adoptive placement. CCDJFS shall send the JFS 01691 to any individual requesting an application for adoption within seven days of receipt of a request for an application.

(C) An application submitted with a knowingly false statement shall not be used to initiate the homestudy. If CCDJFS determines that an application has been falsified, CCDJFS shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(D) CCDJFS shall not begin the homestudy assessment process prior to the receipt of a fully completed JFS 01691 signed by the adoptive parent(s).

(E) CCDJFS shall not accept an application for approval for adoptive placement which does not contain complete and accurate information.

(F) Upon receipt of the completed JFS 01691, CCDJFS shall commence the homestudy process and request the applicant provide additional information including at a minimum:

   (1) Documentation of current marital status, which shall include a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other verification of marital status, if applicable.

   (2) To show the household has an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household, an adoptive applicant shall provide at a minimum:

      (a) A complete JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" (rev. 10/2000).

      (b) Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application.

      (c) Proof of income for the household for a two month period. The verification of income shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's approval.

      (d) At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to maintain the household. The bill or bills shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's approval.
The report of any criminal records check conducted in accordance with section 2151.86 of the Revised Code. Except as provided in paragraph (D) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, CCDJFS shall not recommend a person to be approved as an adoptive parent if the person or any adult member of the applicant’s household has been convicted of any crime listed in paragraph (C) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.

CCDJFS shall search the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or the central registry of abuse and neglect for each adoptive applicant and each adult household member of the applicant’s home prior to approval of the adoptive home. This search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive parent. The search shall also be conducted within ten days of the addition of any new adult member of the household.

CCDJFS shall request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state in which a prospective adoptive applicant or other adult household member in the applicant’s home 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.

A summary report of the results of the search shall be placed in each adoptive home record.

If CCDJFS determines that an adoptive homestudy cannot be initiated, CCDJFS shall send written notification to the applicant stating the reason for not initiating the homestudy and a description of procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision. The notification shall be sent to the applicant no later than fifteen days after the application was submitted.

An applicant shall have the opportunity to revise the JFS 01691 at any time regarding the characteristics or number of children desired. If the agency, based upon receipt of a revised JFS 01691, determines that the applicant is now seeking a special needs child, requirements and time frames for the application and homestudy process shall begin with the date that the revised JFS 01691 is received by the agency. If the applicant revises the JFS 01691 and does not seek to adopt a special needs child, the time frames for the application and homestudy process shall be consistent with the agency's adoption policy prepared pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.

Upon request, CCDJFS shall assist the applicant in completing the application and provide assistance to the applicant in securing all required documents and information.

CCDJFS shall not continue with the homestudy process if all required documentation is not submitted within one hundred eighty days of the receipt of the initial or revised JFS 01691 unless the agency makes a determination that the homestudy should not be terminated and documents this on the JFS 01673 “Assessment for Child Placement” (rev. 12/2014). The applicant shall be notified, in writing, at least thirty days prior to the termination of the application. Written notification shall contain an explanation of the reason for termination and a description of the procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision.

CCDJFS shall document that each person seeking adoption approval successfully completes preservice training, prior to approval of the homestudy. Preservice training shall address the following components:

1. The legal rights and responsibilities of adoptive parents.
2. The recommending agency’s policies and procedures.

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(3) ODJFS requirements for approving adoptive applicants.

(4) The effects placement, separation and attachment issues have on children and their families.

(5) Caregivers' involvement in permanency planning for children and their families and post adoptive issues for children and families including availability of adoption subsidies.

(6) The dynamics of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on human growth and development.

(7) Behavior management techniques.

(8) Effects of caregiving on children's families.

(9) Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases.

(10) Community health and social services available to children and their families.

(11) At least three hours of training on cultural issues including cultural diversity training and an overview of the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Aug. 20, 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.

(12) The substance of section 2152.72 of the Revised Code which deals with the information required to be shared with a prospective adoptive parent before a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed with a prospective adoptive parent. A course addressing section 2152.72 of the Revised Code shall not be less than one hour long.

(O) CCDJFS may waive components of the requirement for education and training if the assessor determines that the family has received training previously or the family has the skills to care for the needs of the child that will be placed in the home. The three hour requirement for cultural issues shall not be waived. When a waiver has been granted by the agency, it shall document the waiver in the case record.

(P) CCDJFS shall not deny the acceptance of the JFS 01691 based on race, color, national origin, handicap, age, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation of the applicant.

(Q) As a public agency, CCDJFS will not discriminate against adoptive applicants relative to their religious affiliation or lack thereof.

Effective: 8/1/17
Restrictions Concerning Provision of Adoption Services
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101-2-48-05 (B) (2) (e), (B) (3) (a), (B) (15)
5101:2-48-10

(A) CCDJFS shall request that the bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) conduct a criminal records check on prospective adoptive parents and adult members of the prospective adoptive parent’s household pursuant to the procedures set forth in section 2151.86 of the Revised Code. If the criminal records check is completed by CCDJFS, fees for the service may be waived.

(B) CCDJFS shall request that BCII include information from the federal bureau of investigation (FBI) in the criminal records check for each person subject to a criminal records check in accordance with division (A)(4) of section 109.572 of the Revised Code.

(C) Except as provided in paragraph (D) of this policy, CCDJFS shall not approve an adoptive placement if the results of the BCII criminal records check or the FBI check indicate that a prospective adoptive parent or, when applicable, any adult member of the household who resides with the prospective adoptive parent has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any of the following:

(1) A violation of section 959.13, 2903.01, 2903.02, 2903.03, 2903.04, 2903.11, 2903.12, 2903.13, 2903.15, 2903.16, 2903.21, 2903.211, 2903.22, 2903.34, 2905.01, 2905.02, 2905.05, 2907.02, 2907.03, 2907.04, 2907.05, 2907.06, 2907.07, 2907.08, 2907.09, 2907.21, 2907.22, 2907.23, 2907.25, 2907.31, 2907.32, 2907.321 (2907.32.1), 2907.322 (2907.32.2), 2907.323 (2907.32.3), 2909.02, 2909.03, 2909.22, 2909.23, 2909.24, 2911.01, 2911.02, 2911.11, 2911.12, 2913.49, 2917.01, 2917.02, 2919.12, 2919.22, 2919.24, 2919.25, 2923.12, 2923.13, 2923.161 (2923.16.1), 2925.02, 2925.03, 2925.04, 2925.05, 2925.06, 2927.12 or 3716.11 of the Revised Code, a violation of section 2905.04 of the Revised Code as it existed prior to July 1, 1996, a violation of section 2919.23 of the Revised Code that would have been a violation of section 2905.04 of the Revised Code as it existed prior to July 1, 1996, had the violation been committed prior to that date, a violation of section 2925.11 of the Revised Code that is not a minor drug possession offense, two or more OVI or OVUAC violations committed within the three years immediately preceding the submission of the application or petition that is the basis of the request, or felonious sexual penetration in violation of former section 2907.12 of the Revised Code.

(2) A violation or an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States that is substantially equivalent to any of the offenses listed in paragraph (C)(1) of this policy.

(D) No person who has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to an offense listed in paragraph (C) of this policy shall be considered for adoptive placement or be an adult resident of the prospective adoptive parent’s household unless CCDJFS finds and documents that person has met all of the following conditions:

(1) Where the offense was a misdemeanor, or would have been a misdemeanor if conviction had occurred under the current criminal code, at least three years have elapsed from the date the person was fully discharged from any imprisonment or probation arising from the conviction.

(2) Where the offense was a felony, at least ten years have elapsed since the person was fully discharged from imprisonment or probation. If a person has a felony conviction for spousal abuse, rape, sexual assault, or homicide, the home shall not be approved.
(3) The victim of the offense was not one of the following:

(a) A person under the age of eighteen or a person sixty years of age or older.

(b) A functionally impaired person as defined in section 2903.10 of the Revised Code.

(c) A developmentally disabled person as defined in section 5123.01 of the Revised Code.

(d) A person with a mental illness as defined in section 5122.01 of the Revised Code.

(4) The prospective adoptive parent’s approval, or the person’s residency in the prospective adoptive parent’s household, will not jeopardize in any way the health, safety, or welfare of the children CCDJFS serves. The following factors shall be considered in determining the person’s approval as an adoptive parent or the person’s residency in the adoptive parent’s household:

(a) The person’s age at the time of the offense.

(b) The nature and seriousness of the offense.

(c) The circumstances under which the offense was committed;

(d) The degree of participation of the person involved in the offense;

(e) The time elapsed since the person was fully discharged from imprisonment or probation.

(f) The likelihood that the circumstances leading to the offense will recur.

(g) Whether the person is a repeat offender. "Repeat offender" means a person who has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to the commission of any of the offenses listed in paragraph (C) of this policy two or more times in separate criminal actions. Convictions or guilty pleas resulting from or connected with the same act, or resulting from offenses committed at the same time, shall be counted as one conviction or guilty plea.

(h) The person’s employment record.

(i) The person’s efforts at rehabilitation and the results of those efforts.

(j) Whether any criminal proceedings are pending against the person.

(k) Whether the person has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a felony contained in the Revised Code that is not listed in paragraph (C) of this policy, if the felony bears a direct and substantial relationship to being an adoptive parent or adult member of the adoptive parent’s household.

(l) Any other factors CCDJFS considers relevant.
(E) It is the prospective adoptive parent’s duty to provide written verification that the conditions specified in paragraph (D) of this policy are met. If the prospective adoptive parent fails to provide such proof or if CCDJFS determines that the proof offered by the prospective adoptive parent is inconclusive, the prospective adoptive parent shall not be considered. Any doubt shall be resolved in favor of protecting the children the CCDJFS serves.

(F) All sections of this policy are applicable to records of convictions that have been sealed pursuant to section 2953.32 of the Revised Code because the information contained in those sealed records bears a direct and substantial relationship to the care to be provided to any child who may be placed in the home.

(G) A conviction of, or a plea of guilty to, an offense listed in paragraph (C) of this policy shall not prevent a person’s approval as an adoptive parent or being an adult household member of the home if the person has been granted an unconditional pardon for the offense pursuant to Chapter 2967 of the Revised Code or the conviction or guilty plea has been set aside pursuant to law. For purposes of this policy, "unconditional pardon" includes a conditional pardon with respect to which all conditions have been performed or have transpired.

(H) The report of any criminal records check conducted by BCII in accordance with section 109.572 of the Revised Code and pursuant to a request made by CCDJFS is not a public record for purposes of section 149.43 of the Revised Code. The report shall be made available only to the following persons:

   (1) The person who is the subject of the criminal records check or his representative;

   (2) CCDJFS or its representative;

   (3) The department of job and family services, and a county department of job and family services or a public children services agency.

   (4) Any court, hearing officer, or other necessary individual involved in a case dealing with the denial of a final decree of adoption or interlocutory order of adoption.

(I) Prospective adoptive parents who are applying for simultaneous approval for adoptive placement and certification as a foster home must be at least twenty-one years of age in order to meet the foster care requirements contained in rule 5101:2-7-02 of the Administrative Code.

(J) Foster parents who are being considered for adoption of a foster child residing in their home shall be assessed according to the standards contained in rules 5101:2-48-11 or 5101:2-48-11.1 of the Administrative Code, as applicable.

(K) CCDJFS may not proceed with adoption services for any of the following persons unless there are compelling reasons in a particular case to do otherwise and CCDJFS has documented the compelling reasons in the applicant’s case record;
(1) A person for whom the homestudy assessment indicates that the applicant would not be a suitable adoptive parent;

(2) A person whose financial management reflects the inability to meet the needs of a child placed in the home even with the provision of financial assistance.

(3) A person diagnosed by a licensed physician, psychiatrist, certified psychologist or licensed independent social worker to have a physical or mental health condition negatively affecting his/her ability to parent a child.

(4) A person who is not seeking to adopt a special needs child(ren).

(a) If there are compelling reasons to complete a homestudy for an applicant(s) seeking to adopt a non-special needs child, the homestudy will be completed within one year of the receipt of the JFS 1691.

(L) Unless there are documented compelling reasons, persons employed by CCDJFS, Children’s Protective Services Division, will not be considered as an adoption resource for children in the permanent custody of CCDJFS awaiting adoption.

(M) CCDJFS will not complete adoptive assessments on persons employed by CCDJFS.

(N) Adoptive applicants or approved adoptive applicants shall provide CCDJFS written notification within twenty-four hours or the next working day if a person residing in the home who is twelve years old, but under eighteen years old, has been convicted or pleaded guilty to any offense listed in appendix A of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code (refer to page 13) or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult, would constitute one of those offenses.

Effective: 10/1/14
OFFENSES AGAINST ANIMALS
R.C. 959.1-- Cruelty to animals

HOMICIDE
R.C. 2903.01-- Aggravated murder
R.C. 2903.02-- Murder
R.C. 2903.03-- Voluntary manslaughter
R.C. 2903.04-- Involuntary manslaughter

ASSAULT
R.C. 2903.11-- Felonious assault
R.C. 2903.12-- Aggravated assault
R.C. 2903.15-- Permitting child abuse
R.C. 2903.13-- Assault
R.C. 2903.16-- Failing to provide for a functionally impaired person

MENACING
R.C. 2903.21-- Aggravated menacing
R.C. 2903.211-- Menacing by stalking
R.C. 2903.22-- Menacing

PATIENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT
R.C. 2903.34-- Patient abuse, neglect

KIDNAPPING AND RELATED ISSUES
R.C. 2905.01-- Kidnapping
R.C. 2905.02-- Abduction
R.C. 2905.04-- Child stealing (as this law existed prior to July 1, 1996)
R.C. 2905.05-- Criminal child enticement

SEX OFFENSES
R.C. 2907.02-- Rape
R.C. 2907.03-- Sexual battery
R.C. 2907.04-- Corruption of a minor
R.C. 2907.05-- Gross sexual imposition
R.C. 2907.06-- Sexual imposition
R.C. 2907.07-- Importuning
R.C. 2907.08-- Voyeurism
R.C. 2907.09-- Public indecency
R.C. 2907.12-- Felonious sexual penetration (as this former section of law existed)
R.C. 2907.21-- Compelling prostitution
R.C. 2907.22-- Promoting prostitution
R.C. 2907.23-- Procuring
R.C. 2907.25-- Prostitution
R.C. 2907.31-- Disseminating matter harmful to juveniles
R.C. 2907.32-- Pandering obscenity
R.C. 2907.321-- Pandering obscenity involving a minor

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R.C. 2907.322-- Pandering sexually oriented matter involving a minor
R.C. 2907.323-- Illegal use of a minor in nudity-oriented material or performance

ARSON
R.C. 2909.02-- Aggravated arson
R.C. 2909.03-- Arson
R.C. 2909.22-- Soliciting or providing support for act of terrorism
R.C. 2909.23-- Making terroristic threat
R.C. 2909.24-- Terrorism

ROBBERY AND BURGLARY
R.C. 2911.01-- Aggravated robbery
R.C. 2911.02-- Robbery
R.C. 2911.11-- Aggravated burglary
R.C. 2911.12-- Burglary

THEFT AND FRAUD
R.C. 2913.49-- Identity Fraud

OFFENSES AGAINST THE PUBLIC PEACE
R.C. 2917.01-- Inciting to violence
R.C. 2917.02-- Aggravated riot

OFFENSES AGAINST THE FAMILY
R.C. 2919.12-- Unlawful abortion
R.C. 2919.22-- Endangering children
R.C. 2919.23-- Interference with custody (that would have been a violation of R.C. 2905.04 as it existed prior to July 1, 1996 if violation had been committed prior to that date)
R.C. 2919.24-- Contributing to unruliness or delinquency of a child
R.C. 2919.25-- Domestic violence

WEAPONS CONTROL
R.C. 2923.12-- Carrying a concealed weapon
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R.C. 2923.13-- Having a weapon while under disability
R.C. 2923.161-- Improperly discharging a firearm at or into a habitation or school

DRUG OFFENSES
R.C. 2925.02-- Corrupting another with drugs
R.C. 2925.03-- Trafficking in drugs
R.C. 2925.04-- Illegal manufacture of drugs or cultivation of marihuana
R.C. 2925.05-- Funding of drug or marihuana trafficking
R.C. 2925.06-- Illegal administration or distribution of anabolic steroids
R.C. 2925.11-- Possession of drugs or marihuana that is not a minor drug possession offense

OTHER
R.C. 2927.12-- Ethnic intimidation
R.C. 3716.11-- Placing harmful objects in food or confection
R.C. 4511.19-- Operating vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs – OVI or OUVAC
Approval of a Foster Home for Adoptive Placement
Pursuant to Rule(s) 5101:2-48-05 (B) (2) (b) (c) (e) (g), (3)(b), 5101:2-48-11

(A) Except as outlined in paragraph (A) of rule 5101:2-48-11.1 of the Administrative Code, when a foster caregiver who is not an approved adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent, an agency assessor 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" (rev. 6/2009)

(b) JFS 01349, "Foster Home Homestudy" (rev. 01/2003) or the JFS 01673, "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 6/2011), the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) and the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2006), 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 CCDJFS is not the recommending agency for foster care, CCDJFS will request the foster care agency to forward copies of all applicable documents in the foster home record within fifteen business days of receipt of the signed release of information.

(3) If the agency initiates an adoptive homestudy with an applicant from another county, it shall notify the PCSA in the county the applicant resides in accordance with the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code.

(4) Once the documentation in paragraph (A)(2) of this policy 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 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 postfinalization 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) CCDJFS shall complete a search of abuse and neglect report history through SACWIS for each foster caregiver and adult household member. The results of the search shall be placed in the foster home record.

   (i) This search is to be used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive parent.

   (ii) 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.

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

(B) CCDJFS shall follow procedures contained in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code for approval or denial of an applicant for adoptive placement. The approval date shall be the same as the approval signature date. The expiration date of the adoption approval span shall be equal to the expiration date of the current foster care certification span, not to exceed two years.

(C) When CCDJFS determines any statement or document provided during the homestudy process is falsified, CCDJFS shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(D) CCDJFS shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or court if the application, homestudy, or any document provided during the homestudy process is determined to contain a false statement knowingly made or submitted by the applicant(s).
(E) CCDJFS shall complete the homestudy assessment within one hundred eighty days of the date the agency received the application. If CCDJFS fails to complete a homestudy within one hundred eighty days it shall be documented on the JFS 01673 the reason(s) CCDJFS is unable to meet this requirement.

(F) If a homestudy is not completed within one year of the application date it shall be terminated unless the agency makes the determination the homestudy should not be terminated. The decision not to terminate shall be made at the agency's discretion and documented on the JFS 01673. If CCDJFS decides to terminate the homestudy, it shall notify the adoptive applicant in writing no less than thirty days prior to the termination. Written notification shall include the reason for termination and the procedures for requesting a review of the agency’s decision.

Effective: 10/01/14
Foster Caregiver Adoption of a Foster Child who has Resided with the Caregiver for at Least Six Consecutive Months
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101-2-48-05 (B) (2) (c) (g) (h), 5101:2-48-11.1

(A) If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child or sibling group who is and has been residing with the foster caregiver for at least six consecutive months, CCDJFS shall provide the foster caregiver with a JFS 01692 "Application For Adoption of a Foster Child or Sibling Group" (rev. 12/2014). The JFS 01692 is a child specific application and expires once the foster child or sibling group is adopted as evidenced by a final decree of adoption or interlocutory decree.

(B) A completed JFS 01692, with supporting documentation serves as a shortened homestudy, replacing the JFS 01691, "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014) and the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 12/2014) required by rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code.

(C) The assessor shall complete the JFS 01530 "Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2014) prior to the approval of the JFS 01692, if the foster family has a total of five or more children residing in the home, including the foster children and any children in kinship care.

(D) CCDJFS shall inform the foster caregiver consideration is given to the application if the placement is in the best interests of the child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.

(E) If CCDJFS determines any statement in a homestudy is falsified, or any document submitted throughout the homestudy process contains a false statement, CCDJFS shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

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

(G) Upon receipt of a JFS 01692 from the foster caregiver, CCDJFS shall review the application with the foster caregiver. CCDJFS shall not require the foster caregiver to undergo a bureau of criminal investigation (BCI) or federal bureau of investigation (FBI) check as a condition of acceptance or approval of the application for adoption of a foster child; however, the agency shall inform the foster caregiver a criminal records check, pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, is required before a court issues a final decree of adoption or an interlocutory order of adoption.

(H) If CCDJFS receives a JFS 01692 from the foster caregiver, it shall provide the foster caregiver with both of the following:

(1) Information about the requirement for adoption training as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.

(2) Information about the application process and eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance, state adoption maintenance, post adoption special services subsidy, and non-recurring adoption expenses.

(I) Prior to the approval of the adoption homestudy, CCDJFS shall document in the case file the foster caregiver has fulfilled the required adoption training as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.
In addition to the completion of the JFS 01692, CCDJFS shall review the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:

1. The homestudy and all subsequent updates.
2. The JFS 01530, if applicable.
3. The most recent JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009).
4. The most recent BCI and FBI reports for all adult household members.
5. The most recent reports of the alleged perpetrator search of child abuse and neglect information from the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) for all adult household members.
6. 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.
7. Case record information documented by the placement worker's visits to the foster home regarding the ability of the foster parent to meet the needs of the child(ren) to be adopted.

The CCDJFS assessor shall review the information listed in paragraph (J) of this policy, as well as the completed JFS 01692 and arrive at one of the following recommendations:

1. Approve the applicant(s) as a prospective adoptive parent for the child(ren) residing in the applicant's home for at least six consecutive months.
2. Deny the application.

The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the adoption homestudy within ten days after the homestudy has been approved or denied.

1. Adoption homestudy approval notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
   a. Date of approval of the JFS 01692.
   b. The name of the child or children for whom the homestudy is being approved.
2. Adoption homestudy denial shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
   a. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the denial.
   b. A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.
(M) The JFS 01692 shall only be used in consideration of the adoptive placement for the child(ren) for whom the homestudy was conducted. A separate JFS 01692 or JFS 01673, as applicable, shall be used for any other child(ren) the family is considering adopting. Once approved, the adoption homestudy shall be amended pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-12.2 of the Administrative Code, as needed.

(N) Upon approval of the foster caregiver for the adoptive placement, the agency shall follow the adoptive placement procedures as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code including, but not limited to, conducting a matching conference.

Effective: 11/01/15
Completion of the Adoption Homestudy
Pursuant to Rule(s) 5101:2-48-05 (B) (2), (3) (b), 5101:2-48-12

A) CCDJFS acting as a representative of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) shall:

   (1) Inform all individuals applying for adoption homestudy approval that they can also be studied for foster home certification.

   (2) Conduct a joint homestudy pursuant to the requirements contained in Chapters 5101:2-5, 5101:2-7 and 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code resulting in the simultaneous approval of the applicant for:

       (a) Adoption homestudy approval.

       (b) Foster care placement.

B) CCDJFS shall ensure that employees or persons under contract with the agency to perform assessor duties comply with the following requirements.

   (1) The assessor definition in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code.

   (2) Rule 5101:2-48-06 of the Administrative Code.

   (3) Section 3107.014 of the Revised Code.

C) To avoid a conflict of interest, or the appearance of any conflict of interest, an assessor shall not perform any assessor duties for any of the following persons:

   (1) Him or her self.

   (2) Any person who is a relative of the assessor.

   (3) Any agency employee for whom the assessor has any supervisory responsibility.

   (4) Any agency employee who has any supervisory responsibility for the assessor.

D) To avoid a conflict of interest, or the appearance of any conflict of interest:

   (1) The agency administrator and a relative of the agency administrator shall not have an adoption homestudy completed by the agency with which the administrator is employed.

   (2) A member of the agency's governing body and a person known to the agency as a relative of the agency's governing body shall not have an adoption homestudy completed by the agency with which the member is associated.

   (3) Adoption inquiries from anyone mentioned in this paragraph wishing to have an adoption homestudy completed shall be referred to another agency with no such appearance of a conflict of interest.
(4) An existing approved adoption homestudy of any person referred to in paragraph (D) of this rule shall be transferred to another adoption agency within sixty days of the effective date of this rule.

(5) If CCDJFS becomes aware an approved adoptive parent of the agency is a relative of the administrator or a relative of the agency's governing body, it shall initiate a transfer of the adoption homestudy. The transfer shall be completed within sixty days of the discovery.

(E) CCDJFS may selectively recruit on the basis of the need for adoptive parents that reflect the diversity of waiting children for whom adoptive homes are needed as specified in the agency's recruitment plan as required by rule 5101:2-48-05 of the Administrative Code.

(1) CCDJFS shall not consider the age, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation of a family for whom that agency is conducting a homestudy in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved or a child is placed in the home.

(2) CCDJFS shall not consider the age, gender, sexual identity, or sexual orientation of a child being considered for adoption in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved or a child is placed in the home.


(F) CCDJFS shall not consider the race, color or national origin of a family for whom the agency is conducting a homestudy in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved or a child is placed in the home.

(1) As prohibited by the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), CCDJFS may not deny any person the opportunity to become an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the person or of any children involved.

(2) CCDJFS shall not consider the race, color, or national origin of a child being considered for adoption in determining whether a homestudy is approved or disapproved or a child is placed in the home.

(3) CCDJFS may consider a child's race, color, or national origin only in those cases it is determined acceptable pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative Code.

(G) CCDJFS shall use the JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014) for all initial adoption homestudy applications.

(1) The agency shall not accept an incomplete JFS 01691.

(2) The agency shall not begin the homestudy assessment process prior to the receipt of a fully completed JFS 01691 signed by the applicant(s).
If a foster care applicant decides during the homestudy process to also become approved for adoption, the homestudy documentation and training completed up to that point may be utilized as long as the documentation or training has not expired upon completion of the homestudy. Applicants shall not be required to duplicate documentation as a result of a new application date.

**H** CCDJFS shall commence the homestudy assessment within thirty days after the date the agency receives a fully completed JFS 01691 signed by the adoptive applicant(s).

(1) Commencement of a homestudy means, at a minimum, scheduling an appointment to interview the applicant or assuring the applicant is informed of the necessary materials required for the assessor to complete the homestudy.

(2) If CCDJFS fails to commence a homestudy within thirty days after receiving an application, CCDJFS shall document on the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014) the reason(s) the agency is unable to meet this requirement.

**I** CCDJFS shall complete the homestudy within one hundred eighty days after the date the agency received the completed application. If CCDJFS fails to complete a homestudy within one hundred eighty days the agency shall document on the JFS 01673 the reason(s) the requirement is unable to be met.

**J** If a homestudy is not completed within one year of the application date it shall be terminated unless CCDJFS makes the determination the homestudy should not be terminated. The decision not to terminate shall be made at the agency's discretion and documented on the JFS 01673. If the agency decides to terminate the homestudy, it shall notify the adoptive applicant in writing no less than thirty days prior to the termination. Written notification shall include the reason for termination and the procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision.

**K** If CCDJFS initiates an adoptive homestudy with an applicant who resides in another county, the CCDJFS shall notify the PCSA in the county the applicant resides. This requirement does not apply to:

(1) An adoption by a step-parent whose spouse is a biological or adoptive parent of the minor to be adopted.

(2) An adoption where the PCSA in the county the adoptive applicant resides contracts with another PCSA to complete the adoptive applicant’s homestudy.

**L** The written notification to the PCSA, required in paragraphs (K) of this policy, shall be sent within ten days of the initiation of the homestudy, and shall include the following information:

(1) The applicant’s name.

(2) The applicant’s address.

(3) The applicant’s telephone number.

(4) The names and dates of birth of all household members at the time of the application.

(5) A request for any relevant information, if known, including, at a minimum:
(a) Confirmation of household members as determined by a review of agency records.

(b) Information relating to any previous foster care or adoption applications and/or placements, such as:

(i) Past or present functioning of the prospective adoptive parent and household members.

(ii) Rule violations.

(iii) Information on the events leading to a removal of any child from the prospective adoptive family home.

(M) When CCDJFS receives a notification letter as listed in paragraph (L) of this policy, CCDJFS shall provide, in writing, any relevant information listed in paragraph (M) (5) of this rule to the requesting agency within fifteen days of the receipt of the letter. If CCDJFS does not have any relevant information regarding the adoptive applicant or any household members, CCDJFS shall respond to the requesting agency that no information was found.

(N) CCDJFS shall maintain written documentation on each adoptive family for whom they receive a notification letter. If the family is known to the agency and a record exists, the information shall be merged with the existing file.

(O) If CCDJFS determines any applicant knowingly provided false information for the homestudy or application, or any document submitted by the applicants during the homestudy process contains false information, CCDJFS shall follow procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(P) The following is required for the homestudy:

(1) An assessor shall conduct a face to face interview with all members of the household over the age of four years. The interview with all members of the household over the age of four years may be a joint interview or separate individual interviews.

(2) Documentation of current marital status, which shall include a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other verification of marital status, if applicable.

(3) The bureau of criminal investigation (BCI) and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code for all persons subject to a criminal records check.

(a) The criminal records check(s) must be completed and the results received by the agency prior to approval of the homestudy.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (D) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, CCDJFS shall not approve an adoption homestudy if the applicant or any adult member of the household has been convicted of any crime listed in paragraph (C) of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.

(4) CCDJFS shall complete an alleged perpetrator search of abuse and neglect report history through the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) for each adoptive applicant and each adult who resides with the applicant.

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(a) A report with the results of the search shall be placed in the adoptive record.

(b) This report is used to determine the suitability of the adoptive applicant as an adoptive parent.

(5) CCDJFS shall 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.

(6) Completion of the JFS 01530 "Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2014) is required at the time of the adoption homestudy when:

(a) A family has a total of five or more children residing in the home at the time of the homestudy, including foster children and children in kinship care, or;

(b) A family will have a total of five or more children residing in the home based upon the number of children residing in the home at the time of the homestudy, including foster children and children in kinship care, and the number of children the family will be approved to adopt.

(7) The JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009) completed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner or certified nurse-midwife within one year prior to approval of the homestudy for the applicant and all household members.

(a) Any written documentation of a physical examination shall be completed by the individual conducting the examination.

(b) The form shall document that the applicant and all members of the household are free from any physical, emotional or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household members to care for the child being adopted.

(c) CCDJFS may require an applicant to secure and provide to the agency a report of an additional examination by a licensed physician, psychologist, or other certified or licensed professional if any of the following apply:

(i) The applicant or any household member has suffered a serious illness or injury within the past year.

(ii) It is determined to be necessary by the agency to ensure the safety, health, or care of any child who may be placed in the home of the applicant.

Any expenses incurred for this report is the responsibility of the adoptive applicant.

(8) The applicant shall have an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and to make timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills, and other debts. To show this, an applicant shall provide at a minimum:

(a) A completed JFS 01681"Applicant Financial Statement" (rev. 10/2000).
(b) Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application.

(c) Proof of income for the household for a two month period. The verification of income shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's approval of the adoption homestudy.

(d) At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to maintain the household. The bill or bills should not be dated more than six months prior to the agency's approval of the adoption homestudy.

(9) Prior to approving the homestudy for adoption, CCDJFS shall document that each person seeking adoption approval successfully completes preservice training in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code. Each person seeking adoption approval shall receive training on the Administrative Code rules and the agency's policies and procedures that are in effect on the date the agency approves the adoption homestudy.

(10) References shall be received by CCDJFS prior to the approval of the homestudy.

(a) The applicant shall provide the names and contact information of at least three people who are unrelated to the applicant and do not reside with the applicant, so that they may be contacted as references. A minimum of three personal references shall be received prior to the date the agency approves the homestudy.

(b) The applicant and all adult household members shall provide the name of any other agency or organization the applicant and any household member has applied to or had a homestudy approved for foster care or adoption, or any organization they have worked with in providing care and supervision of children. The applicant and all adult household members shall complete a written and signed release of information statement so any such reference may be contacted.

(c) The agency shall contact all adult children of the applicant for a reference. If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the homestudy process and documented on the homestudy.

(d) All contacts with references listed in this rule are required and shall be documented in the narrative section of the homestudy.

(11) The JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report for Homes or Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS" (rev. 2/2015) or other form used for a local or state fire inspection certifying the home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of children. The report shall not be dated more than twelve months prior to the agency's approval of the homestudy.

(12) The JFS 01348 "Safety Audit" (rev. 12/2014) completed not more than six months prior to the agency's approval of the homestudy, documenting the residence satisfactorily meets all safety standards.

(13) There shall be a continuous supply of safe drinking water. Well water used for drinking and cooking shall be tested and approved by the health department prior to approval of the adoption homestudy.

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Prior to the end of the assessment process, applicants shall complete and sign the JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) indicating the acceptable characteristics of the child the applicant is willing to adopt.

(a) The determination of the specific number, age, and gender of children the adoptive applicant is approved for is the joint decision of the applicant and the assessor, based on the applicant's strengths and needs.

(b) Upon the request from an applicant or approved adoptive parent, the JFS 1673-A may be updated as often as needed.

CCDJFS shall document in each record that the applicant has been evaluated by an assessor to determine the applicant's compliance with all homestudy requirements and the suitability of the applicant to be approved as an adoptive parent considering all household members.

(1) In completing the evaluation, a written narrative shall be compiled, signed by the assessor, and approved by the supervisor, indicating approval or denial of the application.

(2) This evaluation shall be a completed JFS 01673 or JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child or Sibling Group" (rev. 12/2014), as applicable.

In addition to the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code, CCDJFS requires all applicants to submit a standardized autobiographical form as part of the assessment process. Approval of an adoption homestudy shall not occur prior to the completion of this document, in addition to all requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code that are applicable to the approval of the adoption homestudy.

The assessor shall make one or more of the following recommendations at the completion of the adoption homestudy:

(1) Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parent(s).

(2) Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parents and recommend the applicant(s) for certification as a foster caregiver(s) simultaneously.

(3) Deny the adoption application.

The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided within ten days after the homestudy is approved or disapproved.

(1) Adoption homestudy approval notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

   (a) Date of approval of the adoptive homestudy with the date the approved homestudy expires.

   (b) A description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the applicant is being approved.

(2) Adoption homestudy denial shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
(a) A detailed explanation of the reasons for the denial.

(b) A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.

(U) No later than ten days after the homestudy is completed, CCDJFS shall document the results of the homestudy on the JFS 01609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary" (rev. 2/2005).

(V) CCDJFS shall enter the appropriate data into SACWIS to complete the provider record and approve the adoption homestudy.

(W) CCDJFS shall not release a homestudy to any other agency or probate court if it is determined that the application, homestudy or any document provided during the homestudy process contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant.

(X) The homestudy shall be updated every two years from the date of approval of the initial homestudy in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-12.1 of the Administrative Code. The homestudy shall be amended, if applicable, in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-12.2 of the Administrative Code.

(Y) If a child has been placed in an approved adoptive home, the agency shall assure that the home continues to be in an approved status until the adoption is finalized by updating and amending the homestudy in accordance with rules 5101:2-48-12.1 and 5101:2-48-12.2 of the Administrative Code.

Effective: 08/01/17
Completion of Adoption Homestudy Updates 
Pursuant to Rule(s) 5101:2-48-05 (B) (2), 5101:2-48-12.1

(A) All adoption homestudies shall be updated every two years from the date of approval of the initial homestudy or the date of approval of the most current update, whichever is more recent. If a homestudy is simultaneously approved for adoption and certified for foster care by CCDJFS, the spans shall be the same for both programs from the date of the foster home certification.

(1) If a CCDJFS approved adoptive home is subsequently certified for foster care by CCDJFS, the adoptive homestudy shall be updated at the same time the home is initially certified for foster care so that the spans will coincide.

(2) If a CCDJFS certified foster home is subsequently approved for adoption by CCDJFS, the next adoption update shall be completed when the current foster care certificate is recertified so that the spans will coincide.

(B) CCDJFS shall ensure that employees or persons under contract with the agency to complete adoption homestudy updates comply with the following requirements.

(1) The assessor definition in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code.

(2) Rule 5101:2-48-06 of the Administrative Code.

(3) Section 3107.014 of the Revised Code.

(C) CCDJFS shall notify the adoptive parent(s) of the date of expiration of the homestudy not fewer than ninety days or more than one hundred fifty days prior to the expiration date. The notification shall:

(1) Identify any information or documentation that is required for the homestudy update.

(2) Be completed on the JFS 01331, "Notice of Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certificate or Adoption Homestudy Approval" (rev. 12/2014).

(D) Following agency notification to the adoptive parent as required by paragraph (C) of this policy, if the adoptive parent fails to either reapply or voluntarily terminate prior to the expiration date of the approval, the homestudy approval shall expire. If the family wishes to have an adoption homestudy approval after the expiration date, they shall reapply through the initial homestudy application process pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.

Following the expiration of an adoption homestudy approval:

(1) CCDJFS shall enter the appropriate data into the system to close the adoption homestudy.

(E) If the adoptive parent has applied to update an adoption homestudy prior to the expiration of a current adoption approval, an assessor shall complete a JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update" (rev. 12/2014), ensure that the adoptive parent remains in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code, and determine the continued suitability of the adoptive family. The agency shall compile and review the following documents, in addition to completing the JFS 01385:

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(1) The most recent JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009) completed for the applicant and all household members by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner or certified nurse-midwife. The agency may require a new JFS 01653 if the agency deems it necessary.

(2) CCDJFS may require a report of a physical, psychiatric or psychological examination or treatment of the adoptive parent(s) or other household member in order to ensure the safety, health or care of an adoptive child. The examination shall be conducted by a licensed physician, psychologist, or other certified or licensed professional. Any expenses incurred for this report is the responsibility of the adoptive parent(s).

(3) The most recent fire inspection by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office using the JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report for Homes or Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS" (rev. 2/2015) or other form used for a local or state fire inspection. The agency may require a new fire inspection at the time of the update if the agency deems it necessary to ensure the home is free from conditions which may be hazardous to the safety of an adoptive child.

(4) The most recent JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" (rev. 10/2000). The agency may require a new JFS 01681 if there have been any substantial changes to the adoptive family's financial situation.

(5) The most recent well water test approved by the health department, if applicable. The agency may require a new well water test if the agency deems it necessary.

(6) The most recent JFS 01530 "Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2014), if applicable. If the family circumstances have changed substantially since the previous JFS 01530, or if a JFS 01530 was not previously completed and is now required, the agency shall complete a new JFS 01530 at the time of the update.

(7) CCDJFS shall complete an alleged perpetrator search of abuse and neglect report history through SACWIS for each adoptive parent and adult household member.

(a) A report with the results of the search shall be placed in the adoptive provider record.

(b) This report is to be used to determine the continued suitability of the adoptive family.

(8) CCDJFS shall conduct a safety audit utilizing the JFS 01348 "Safety Audit" (rev. 12/2014) completed within six months prior to the approval of the adoption homestudy update, documenting the residence continues to meet all safety standards.

(9) The most recent criminal records check for the adoptive parents and adult household members. Once a homestudy is approved, a new criminal records check shall be conducted, pursuant to section 2151.86 of the Revised Code, for the adoptive parent(s) and each adult household member at least every four years prior to approving the adoption update. If an existing resident of the home, including youth placed in the home, turned eighteen years of age during the current approval span, the agency shall have criminal records checks completed at the time of the next update and every four years thereafter at the time of update.
(10) A minimum of one written reference from a professional who is knowledgeable of the family dynamics and family functioning. If a reference is not available from a professional, a personal reference from someone aware of the adoptive family's functioning is permissible. This reference shall not be completed by a relative or a household member. This reference is required for families who are only approved for adoption by CCDJFS. If the family is also certified for foster care by CCDJFS, the reference is not required.

(F) An assessor’s update of an adoption homestudy shall include at least one home visit and one interview with each member of the household (except foster children) over the age of four years currently residing in the home. This may be a joint interview or individual interviews.

(G) If CCDJFS receives a completed JFS 01331 at least thirty days prior to the expiration date of the adoption approval, CCDJFS shall follow the requirements listed in this rule to complete the assessment for the update of the adoption approval.

(1) At the completion of the assessment and prior to the expiration of the current adoption homestudy approval span:

(a) CCDJFS shall enter the required data into SACWIS documenting one of the following:

   (i) Adoption update approval.

   (ii) Denial of the adoption update and closure of the adoption homestudy.

   (iii) Closure, based on receipt of voluntary withdrawal.

(2) The effective date of the adoption homestudy approval shall be the first day following the expiration of the previous approval span.

(H) If CCDJFS receives a completed JFS 01331 less than thirty days prior to the expiration of the adoption approval, CCDJFS may complete the requirements listed in this policy if CCDJFS has sufficient time and resources to complete the assessment and submit the requirements in paragraph (G) of this policy prior to the expiration date of the current approval span.

(1) If CCDJFS is unable to complete the update of the adoption approval prior to the expiration, the adoption approval will expire on the date of expiration.

(2) If the adoption approval expires, CCDJFS shall, within ten days after the expiration date of the current approval span:

   (a) Provide written notification to the family of the following:

      (i) That the adoption homestudy approval has expired.

      (ii) That the family must reapply for initial adoption approval pursuant to rule 5101:2-48:12 of the Administrative Code if they would like to obtain adoption homestudy approval.

   (b) CCDJFS shall enter the required data into the system to document the provider has closed because the adoption homestudy approval has expired.
The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the update to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten days of completion of the adoption approval update.

(1) Adoption homestudy update approval notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

   (a) Date of approval of the adoption homestudy update with the date the update expires.

   (b) A description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the update is being approved.

(2) Adoption homestudy update denial shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

   (a) A detailed explanation of the reasons for the denial.

   (b) A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.

**Effective: 11/01/15**
Required Notification and Adoption Homestudy Amendments
Pursuant to Rule(s) 5101:2-48-05 (B) (2), (3) (a), 5101:2-48-12.2

(A) An approved adoptive parent shall notify CCDJFS within one hour of any of the following circumstances involving an adoptive child whose adoption is not finalized:

(1) A serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the adoptive child.

(2) Unauthorized absence of the adoptive child from the home.

(3) Removal of the adoptive child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency, or attempts at such removal.

(4) Any involvement of the adoptive child with law enforcement authorities.

(5) The death of the adoptive child.

(B) An approved adoptive parent shall notify CCDJFS within twenty-four hours or the next working day if any of the following occur:

(1) A change in the marital status of an approved adoptive parent(s).

(2) Any serious illness or death of an approved adoptive parent or household member.

(3) The finalization of an adoptive child placed by a different agency.

(4) A change in the number of household members, not including foster children.

(5) A criminal charge or conviction of any approved adoptive parent or other adult household member(s).

(6) A significant change in financial status or income.

(7) A change of address for the adoptive family that is different than the address listed on the most recent homestudy or update.

(C) If CCDJFS is notified of any of the following changes for the adoptive family, the agency shall amend the homestudy:

(1) A change in the marital status of the approved adoptive parent(s).

(2) The death of an approved adoptive parent or household member.

(3) A change in household members, not including foster children.

(4) A change of address for the adoptive family that is different than the address listed on the most recent homestudy or update.
CCDJFS shall ensure that employees or persons under contract with the agency to perform assessor duties comply with the following requirements.

1. The assessor definition in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Administrative Code.


3. Section 3107.014 of the Revised Code.

An amendment is a narrative of the assessor’s evaluation of the change that has occurred in the approved adoptive family. The agency shall document the date of notification in the amendment.

1. The amendment shall be completed within thirty days of the date of the change, or within thirty days of the date the agency became aware a change occurred if notification did not occur pursuant to paragraphs (A) or (B) of this rule.

2. If the change is to add an adoptive parent to the homestudy, the amendment shall not be completed until the preservice training has been completed or waived pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code.

3. In completing the amendment, CCDJFS shall, if necessary, redetermine the specific number, age, and gender of children the family is approved to adopt. The amendment shall address sleeping arrangements, beds and bedrooms, and shall evaluate whether the adoptive family remains in compliance with all applicable requirements.

4. The amendment shall be completed in the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS).

If the amendment is due to a new household member, CCDJFS shall ensure the following:

1. New household members residing with the adoptive parent shall have a JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009) completed documenting they are free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household member to care for the child placed in the home.

   a. If the new occupant is an adopted child who immediately prior to the adoption resided in the home as a foster child, a JFS 01653 is not required.

   b. The JFS 01653 shall be dated within ninety days of the date the person becomes a household member.

   c. If the agency was not notified of the new household member pursuant to paragraph (B) of this policy, the agency shall ensure the new household member completes the JFS 01653 within ninety days of the date the agency became aware of the new household member.

2. New adult household members residing with the approved adoptive parent shall have a bureau of criminal investigation (BCI) and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) records check, as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.

   a. The criminal records checks shall be conducted within ten working days of the date the person becomes a household member.
(b) If the agency was not notified of the new household member pursuant to paragraph (B) of this policy, the criminal record checks shall be conducted within ten working days of the date the agency became aware of the new household member.

(3) New adult household members shall provide the name of any agency they have applied to or had a homestudy approved for foster care or adoption, or any organization they have worked with in providing care and supervision of children. The new adult household member shall complete a written and signed release of information so that any such reference may be contacted.

(4) CCDJFS shall complete an alleged perpetrator search of abuse and neglect report history through SACWIS for the new adult household member within ten working days of the date the person becomes a 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 the new adult household member within ten working days of the date they become a household member. If the agency was not notified of the new household member pursuant to paragraph (B) of this rule, the agency shall ensure the search is conducted within ten working days of the date the agency became aware of the new household member.

   (a) A report with the results of the search shall be placed in the adoptive record.

   (b) This report is used to determine the continued suitability of the adoptive family.

(5) CCDJFS shall request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state the new adult household member has resided in for the five years immediately prior to the date of the criminal records check for the new household member, as required by division (A) of section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.

(6) If the new household member is the spouse of the approved adoptive parent and shall therefore be added as an approved adoptive parent, CCDJFS shall ensure the following is completed in addition to the requirements found in paragraph (F) of this policy:

   (a) The agency shall contact all adult children of the new spouse for a reference. If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the amendment process and documented in the amendment.

   (b) If the new spouse has not previously completed the preservice training, the agency shall ensure the spouse completes the training or meets the requirements for a waiver pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-09 of the Administrative Code no later than one hundred eighty days after becoming a household member. The spouse shall not be added to the adoption approval until the training or waiver has been completed.

(G) If the amendment is due to a change of address of the adoptive family, CCDJFS shall ensure the following:

(1) The agency shall conduct a safety audit documenting the new residence satisfactorily meets all safety standards.

   (a) The safety audit shall be completed on the JFS 01348 "Safety Audit" (rev. 12/2014).

   (b) The safety audit shall be conducted within ten working days after the change of address.
(c) If the agency was not notified of the change of address pursuant to paragraph (B) of this rule, the agency shall conduct the safety audit within ten working days of the date they became aware of the change of address.

(2) CCDJFS shall require the approved adoptive parent to obtain a fire safety inspection certifying the new residence is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of an adoptive child.

(a) The fire safety inspection shall be completed on the JFS 01200 "Fire Inspection Report for Homes or Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS" (rev. 2/2015) or other form used for a local or state fire inspection.

(b) The fire safety inspection shall be requested prior to or within thirty days of the date of the change of address. If the agency was not notified of the change of address pursuant to paragraph (B) of this policy, then the fire safety inspection shall be requested within thirty days of the date the agency became aware of the change of address.

(c) The fire safety inspection shall be conducted prior to or within ninety days of the date of the change of address. If the agency was not notified of the change of address pursuant to paragraph (B) of this rule, then the fire safety inspection shall be conducted within ninety days of the date the agency became aware of the change of address.

(H) The assessor shall provide written notification to the adoptive parent of approval or denial of the amendment to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten days of completion of the homestudy amendment. If an amendment is denied, the adoption homestudy is no longer approved.

(1) Amendment approval notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(a) A summary of the change requiring the amendment.

(b) The date of the notification provided pursuant to paragraph (B) of this policy.

(c) The date the change occurred that required the amendment.

(d) Date of approval of the adoption amendment.

(2) Adoption homestudy denial shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

(a) A detailed explanation of the reasons for the denial.

(b) A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.

Effective: 12/01/15
Sharing and Transferring Adoptive Homestudies
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (4), (B) (5), (B) (13), 5101:2-48-19

(A) The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

(1) "Sharing an adoptive homestudy" means forwarding an approved adoptive homestudy to a public children services agency (PCSA), private child placing agency (PCPA), or comparable agency in another state for consideration of potential adoption matches, or receiving an approved adoptive homestudy from a PCSA, PCPA, private non-custodial agency (PNA) or comparable agency in another state for the same purpose.

(2) "Transferring an adoptive homestudy" means releasing a copy of the approved homestudy and all related materials to another agency. Upon acceptance of the receiving agency and the execution of the JFS 01334 "Recommendation for Transfer of a Foster or Adoptive Home" (rev. 12/2014) the sending agency is relieved of all responsibilities related to the approved adoptive family.

(B) CCDIFS shall not solicit homestudies or transfers from other agencies for the purpose of locating a family of a specific race, color or national origin.

(C) CCDIFS shall only consider approved homestudies forwarded by another agency. A copy of the adoption homestudy shall not be accepted directly from the approved adoptive parent or other individual. An adoptive parent may provide other information to the receiving agency that the parent considers to be relevant. CCDIFS shall not require any additional documentation for the homestudy beyond the requirements of Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code.

(D) If the approved adoptive family has signed a release of information the agency shall make the homestudy available to any other agency requesting a copy of the homestudy for sharing or transferring.

(1) CCDIFS shall not release or accept a homestudy for sharing or transferring purposes if it has been determined that the homestudy or a supporting document contains a false statement knowingly made by the adoptive parent. The agency shall follow the procedures outlined in rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code when the determination has been made that a document was falsified.

(2) CCDIFS shall charge $1500.00 for the release of the homestudy and related documents. Once CCDIFS is in receipt of the $1500.00 fee, and there has been an execution of an authorization for release of information form, CCDIFS will release the homestudy to up to ten different adoption agencies. If additional requests are made, CCDIFS will charge $0.25 per page.

CCDIFS will not charge a fee to another PCSA for the release of the homestudy and related documents.

(E) CCDIFS shall forward a copy of the homestudy and all related materials within fifteen working days of the receipt of the signed release of information and any applicable fee pursuant to paragraph (D) of this policy. If the request is to transfer the homestudy, then the most recent report of the alleged perpetrator search of child abuse and neglect information from the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) shall also be forwarded to the receiving agency with the homestudy and related materials.
(F) If CCDJFS receives a homestudy and determines that the homestudy or a supporting document contains a knowingly false statement, CCDJFS shall not consider the homestudy in any matching conference or for consideration of a transfer and shall notify the sending agency in writing of the false statement within three days of the determination of the false statement.

(G) If CCDJFS receives an incomplete homestudy, or supporting documentation is missing from the record, CCDJFS shall notify the sending agency in writing within ten days from the date of receipt of the incomplete homestudy.

(1) The written notification shall indicate the information needed in order for the homestudy to be considered complete as required by Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code.

(2) The sending agency shall respond within fifteen days from the date of receipt of the written notification from the receiving agency.

(H) Upon receipt of the record, CCDJFS shall assign an assessor to review the information received and conduct an assessment of the transfer request.

(1) In addition to reviewing the recommending agency's records and any information provided by the adoptive parent(s), the assessor shall:

   (a) Contact staff from the current recommending agency and the adoptive parent(s) to determine the reasons why the request to transfer is being made at this time.

   (b) Make at least one visit to the home and conduct a face-to-face meeting with each adoptive parent and all other household members.

   (c) Receive three new personal references for the adoptive parent(s) from persons who are unrelated to the adoptive parent and do not live with the family.

   (d) Receive new references from all adult children of the adoptive parent(s). If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the transfer process and documented in the provider record.

   (e) Conduct a new criminal records check for all persons subject to a criminal records check residing in the home. Results shall be obtained, reviewed and approved prior to accepting the transfer request.

   (f) Complete a new safety audit of the adoptive home on the JFS 01348 "Safety Audit" (rev. 12/2014) to ensure the home meets all current safety requirements.

(2) If a transfer request is pending within ninety days immediately prior to the expiration date of the two year approval span, the current agency and CCDJFS may determine through mutual agreement which agency will conduct the update of the adoption homestudy.

(3) The assessor shall complete the transfer assessment within sixty days of the date the complete record was received from the current agency. If the transfer cannot be completed in this timeframe, the assessor shall document the reason(s) in the record.
Upon completion of the assessment, the assessor shall make a final decision regarding the transfer and document that decision in the receiving agency's record. Written notice of the decision shall be given to the adoptive parent and the recommending agency within five working days of the date the decision was made. The approval or rejection of a transfer request rests solely with the receiving agency. Nothing in this rule shall be construed to require an agency to accept the transfer of an adoption homestudy from another agency.

If the decision is to deny the transfer request, all information contained in the copy of the record from the current recommending agency as well as any information gathered during the transfer assessment, including the written notice to deny the request, shall be maintained by the agency for at least two years.

If the decision is to approve the transfer request, the JFS 01334 shall be completed and signed by both the sending and receiving agencies, and all information gathered during the assessment process shall be incorporated into the receiving agency’s adoptive provider record.

1. If the sending agency has the appropriate access to SACWIS, the sending agency shall enter the applicable data into the system to complete the transfer to the receiving agency.

2. If the sending agency does not have the appropriate access to SACWIS, then either the sending agency or the receiving agency shall submit the completed JFS 01334 to ODJFS to complete the transfer process.

Homestudies received from other agencies shall be regularly considered for potential adoption matches pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code. CCDJFS shall integrate all homestudy materials and related documents received from other PCSAs, PCPAs or PNAs into its files of approved homestudies. Homestudies shall be maintained and considered for potential adoption matches until the date of their expiration.

The homestudy, not including reference letters, may be released to the adoptive applicant.

Effective: 11/1/15
Notification of Permanent Custody Motion or Prospective Adoptive Placement Pursuant to Rule(s):  5101:2-48-05 (B) (3) (d)

(A) CCDHS shall notify a child’s foster or relative caregiver if:

(1) CCDJFS seeks permanent custody of the child,

(2) CCDJFS has permanent custody of the child,

(3) CCDJFS seeks to place the child for adoption.

(B) The notice shall inform the foster or relative caregiver that they can be considered for adoption.

(C) If the foster or relative caregiver informs CCDJFS that they want to adopt the child, CCDJFS shall inform the foster or relative caregiver of the process for obtaining an application to adopt the child and that the child may be placed for adoption in another home even if the foster or relative caregiver submits the application.

(D) If CCDJFS is given permanent custody of the child and the foster or relative caregiver has informed CCDJFS of their desire to adopt the child, CCDJFS shall consider giving preference to an adult relative over a nonrelative caregiver when determining an adoptive placement for the child, provided the adult relative satisfies all relevant child protection standards and CCDJFS determines that the placement is in the child’s best interest.

Effective:  9/1/17
Adoption Preplacement and Placement Procedures
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (8), (B) (9), (B) (10) (B) (11), 5101:2-48-16

(A) CCDJFS shall begin services to prepare a child for adoptive placement no later than the date of the permanent custody. The date of permanent custody shall be either:

(1) The date of the court’s filing of its order of permanent commitment of the child to CCDJFS pursuant to section 2151.353, 2151.354, or 2151.414 of the Revised Code.

(2) The date of proper execution on the JFS 01666 "Permanent Surrender of Child" (rev. 10/2013) pursuant to section 5103.15 of the Revised Code.

(B) CCDJFS shall assign an assessor to work with the child on adoption planning issues and adoptive placement no later than forty-five days after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order. If the order is under appeal, the agency shall assign an assessor to work with the child on adoption planning issues and adoption placement within forty-five days of the issuance of the final decision.

(C) The assessor may also serve as the child's caseworker. If the assessor is assigned as the primary caseworker, the assessor shall visit with the child at least monthly. If the assessor is not assigned as the primary caseworker, the assessor shall visit with the child every other month at a minimum. The visit with the assessor may meet the requirements of rules 5101:2-42-65 and 5101:2-48-17 of the Administrative Code. During those visits, the assessor shall review and help the age appropriate child explore the following adoption issues

(1) Separation and attachment issues.

(2) Feelings concerning adoption and permanency.

(3) Terms and conditions of an open adoption, if applicable.

(D) CCDJFS shall document the services provided to prepare the child for adoption in the case record.

(E) For the purpose of this rule, "pre-adoptive staffing" is the process of identifying, planning and coordinating services for a child after the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order.

(F) CCDJFS shall conduct a pre-adoptive staffing according to the following:

(1) No earlier than the date of the filing for termination of parental rights (TPR)

(2) No later than forty-five days after the execution of the permanent surrender or of the file stamp date of the permanent custody order.

(G) If the order is under appeal, the agency may hold a pre-adoptive staffing prior to the issuance of the final decision.
The invitation to the pre-adoptive staffing shall be in written form, shall be documented in the case file, and shall be sent to the individual at least fourteen days prior to the staffing. The individuals shall be notified if any staffing is rescheduled or canceled at least three days prior to the scheduled staffing or as soon as the information is available. The following individuals shall be invited to attend the pre-adoptive staffing.

1. The child's caseworker.
2. The child's caseworker's supervisor.
3. The assessor assigned to work with the child on adoption issues and the adoption placement, if different from the child's caseworker.
4. The assessor’s supervisor, if different from the caseworker’s supervisor.
5. Any professional who has the specific assignment of recruiting families for children who are awaiting adoption, if applicable.
6. Any assessor who has or is in the process of conducting a homestudy for a kinship family or a foster family who has indicated an interest in the child, if applicable.
7. The guardian ad-litem (GAL) if one has been assigned to the case.
8. The court appointed special advocates (CASA) worker, if one has been assigned to the case.
9. Key professionals working specifically with the child who have knowledge about the child’s history and current needs that will be helpful to determine the child's placement needs.
10. The child's current caregiver, if deemed appropriate by CCDJFS.
11. The child, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate by CCDJFS.
12. The birth family, if in the best interest of the child and deemed appropriate by CCDJFS.
13. The prospective adoptive family, if deemed appropriate by CCDJFS.
14. The PCSA or PCPA Multiethnic Placement Act (MEPA) monitor.

During the pre-adoptive staffing, the convened group will identify, coordinate and provide services that consider all of the following:

1. The child's social, developmental and medical history.
2. Previous placements, including any residential placements, adoption disruptions or dissolutions.
3. Specific recruitment efforts to find a permanent home for the child.
4. Current strengths, limitations or other special considerations, including previous or current relationships with siblings, birth relatives or kin.
(5) Current therapeutic assessments or other needs to be considered in determining the child's adoptive placement.

(6) Transition of the case planning from a focus on foster care to adoption.

(7) Planning for good-bye visits, if applicable.

(8) Assessing the child's understanding and readiness for adoption.

(9) Status of child's lifebook.

(10) Any families who may be interested in adopting the child.

(11) Other preparation for adoption.

(J) CCDJFS shall document the pre-adoptive staffing on the JFS 01690 "Documentation of the Pre-adoptive Staffing " (rev. 4/2017) and maintain the form in the child's adoptive case record. Following the pre-adoptive staffing, the agency may distribute the JFS 01690 to assessors who are responsible for completing or maintaining adoption homestudies.

(K) For purposes of this rule, a "matching conference" is the process of determining the most appropriate family to adopt a child based on the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective adoptive parent to meet those needs. A matching conference shall be conducted to match a child with a family for the purpose of adoption. The matching conference shall be held prior to the placement of the child for adoption as outlined in this rule.

(L) The JFS 01530 "Large Family Assessment" (rev. 12/2014) as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code shall be discussed, if applicable.

(M) CCDJFS shall hold the initial matching conference according to the following:

(1) Within ninety days of the execution of the permanent surrender or the file stamp date of the permanent custody order, unless the order is under appeal.

(2) If the order is under appeal, the agency may hold a matching conference prior to the issuance of the final decision. If the order is under appeal, the agency shall hold the initial matching conference no later than ninety days after the issuance of the final decision.

(N) The invitation to the matching conference shall be in written form, shall be documented in the case file, and shall be sent to the individual at least fourteen days prior to the matching conference. The individuals shall be notified if any matching conference is rescheduled or canceled at least three days prior to the scheduled matching conference or as soon as the information is available. The following individuals shall be invited to the matching conferences:

(1) For the first matching conference only, the child's previous caseworker if the individual is different than the assessor assigned to work on adoption issues and placement.

(2) For the first matching conference only, the child's previous caseworker's supervisor, if applicable.

(3) The assessor assigned to work with the child on adoption issues and placement.
(4) The assessor’s supervisor.

(5) The child’s caseworker, if different from the assessor above.

(6) Any professional who has the specific assignment of recruiting families for children who are awaiting adoption if there are no families identified for the child being presented in the matching conference, including any child-focused or child-specific recruiter working on behalf of the child.

(7) The child, if in the best interests of the child and deemed appropriate by CCDJFS.

(8) Any worker from any agency who is responsible for an approved adoptive family or adoptive applicant being presented at the matching conference. If an adult kin or current foster caregiver has submitted an application less than fourteen days prior to the matching conference and pursuant to paragraph (V)(3) of this rule, then the necessary parties shall be invited to the matching conference upon receipt of the application.

(9) The GAL, if one has been assigned to the case.

(10) The CASA, if one has been assigned to the case.

(11) Any other professional who may have knowledge of the child’s history and current needs that will be helpful to determine the child’s placement needs.

(12) The PCSA or PCPA MEPA monitor.

(13) The ODJFS MEPA coordinator at matchingconference@jfs.ohio.gov.

(O) At a minimum, the following individuals shall participate in the matching conference and be included in the placement decision-making process:

(1) The adoption caseworker for the child.

(2) The worker for any prospective adoptive families who will be presented at the matching conference. If the worker is unable to participate in the matching conference, another professional with knowledge of the family being presented shall participate in the matching conference.

(3) Any child-focused or child-specific recruiter working on behalf of the child.

(4) A member of the administrative or supervisory staff of CCDJFS’ adoption program.

(P) If the child caseworker and family caseworker are the same individual, another adoption program staff member shall participate in the matching conference to assure that at least three individuals participate in the matching decision.

(Q) If CCDJFS does not have at least three adoption program staff employees to participate in the matching conference, a professional or para-professional who is employed by the PCSA or PCPA shall participate in the matching conference. This person shall have, at a minimum, basic knowledge related to special needs adoption and permanency planning.
If more than one PCSA, PCPA or private non-custodial agency (PNA) is involved in an adoptive matching decision, a representative from each agency shall participate in the matching conference. Participation by teleconference or other electronic means is acceptable. The PCSA, PCPA, or PNA shall provide relevant information that may impact the safety and well being of the child being placed with the prospective adoptive family which shall include at a minimum:

1. Past or present functioning of the prospective adoptive parent.
2. Rule violation(s) involving foster and/or pre-adoptive child(ren).
3. Third party investigations.
4. Information relating to previous adoption applications.
5. Previous disruptions from the prospective adoptive family home.


CCDJFS shall document each matching conference for each child on the JFS 01610 "Child's Permanency Planning Data Summary" (rev. 2/2005).

The matching decision shall be based on the following, at a minimum:

1. Consideration of the placement of siblings together.
2. The JFS 01690.
3. The child study inventory.
4. The JFS 01689.
5. The JFS 01688 "Individualized Child Assessment" (rev. 4/2014), if applicable.
6. The child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.

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

2. Whenever possible and in the best interest of the child(ren), sibling groups should not be separated.
3. Any adult kin, or the child's current foster caregiver, when the following apply:
   (a) The adult has expressed an interest in adopting the child and already has an approved adoptive homestudy, or has submitted the required document listed below at least five business days prior to the scheduled matching conference.
(i) The JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 12/2014)

(ii) The JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child or Sibling Group" (rev. 12/2014).

(iii) The adoption application or equivalent document that is required in the state the adult resides in.

(b) Placement with the adult would establish permanency for the child and be in the best interest of the child.

(4) A foster caregiver with whom the child has resided in the past, whose placement would be in the best interest of the child and who is approved for adoption pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code or the laws of the state where the previous foster caregiver now resides.

(5) Any other approved adoptive parent(s) who is accepting of the child's characteristics, who has expressed an interest in adopting the child, and whose placement would be in the best interest of the child.

(W) CCDJFS will be non-discriminatory when determining what approved adoptive parents listed in paragraph (V) will be presented as a potential adoptive parent for the child in the matching conference. If there are more than five families who are potential matches for the child, the agency may narrow the number of families to a minimum of five based on:

(1) The level of experience the family has in working with child(ren) with the specific behavior, medical or mental health challenges that a specific child presents.

(2) The preference to keep siblings together if in the child's best interest.

(X) If a family was previously considered for a child in a matching conference and was not interested in the child, the agency does not have to consider the family for the same child in subsequent matching conferences.

(Y) Subsequent matching conferences shall be held for the child, except as referenced in paragraph (Y) of this rule, at least once every ninety days.

(Z) If there are no families available to be considered at a matching conference for a specific child and the JFS 01654 "Adoptive Placement Agreement" (rev. 4/2017) has not been signed, the agency shall conduct child-specific recruitment for the child prior to the next matching conference. Child specific recruitment shall include at least two of the three activities below:

(1) Distribution of written information regarding the child to two or more adoption agencies, media outlets, or social media sites used to recruit adoptive families for the child.

(2) Review case file information for relatives or individuals in the child's past who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.

(3) Exploration with the child of individuals with whom the child is familiar who may be able and willing to provide a permanent home for the child.

(AA) Subsequent matching conferences are not required when:

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(1) The child has been matched with an adoptive family in a matching conference and there is a complete JFS 01654 that includes the adoptive placement date and signatures of the adoptive parent(s) and applicable agencies.

(2) The child is age eighteen years old or older. However, the agency has the option to continue to hold matching conferences until the child reaches age twenty-one if the child is mentally or physically handicapped and still in the permanent custody of the agency.

(3) The child’s custody changes to a status other than permanent custody.

(BB) If the child’s adoptive placement disrupts CCDJFS shall begin the cycle of ninety day matching conferences again with the first one due ninety days from the date of disruption.

(CC) No later than seven business days after each matching conference, CCDJFS shall provide written information necessary for the completion of the JFS 01609 "Family Permanency Planning Data Summary" (rev. 2/2005) to any Ohio agency that had a family presented at the matching conference. The agency responsible for each prospective adoptive family presented at the matching conference shall document the outcome of the matching conference for the family on the JFS 01609.

(DD) CCDJFS shall make an adoptive placement only when it has permanent custody of the child, whether custody is obtained by permanent surrender or commitment. A child shall only be placed into an adoptive home which meets the best interests and special needs of the child.

(EE) CCDJFS shall not place a child in an Ohio home for the purpose of adoption unless an adoptive homestudy has been completed and approved by an Ohio PCSA, PCPA or PNA pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-48 of the Administrative Code. The homestudy shall be completed by an agency with authority recognized by ODJFS to complete adoptive homestudies.

(FF) CCDJFS may place a child in an adoptive home in another state pursuant to rules and regulations governing the interstate placement of children pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-52 of the Administrative Code.

(GG) Prior to the adoptive placement, CCDJFS shall provide the prospective adoptive parent with the completed and signed JFS 01667 "Adoption Information Disclosure" (rev. 7/2016) in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-21 of the Administrative Code.

(HH) The JFS 01654 shall explain the responsibilities and authority of those who sign it. The following shall sign the JFS 01654 on or before the date of the adoptive placement:

(1) CCDJFS director or designee.

(2) Adoptive parent(s).

(3) Any other PCSA, PCPA, PNA or out of state agency providing adoption services, if applicable.

(II) A copy of the signed JFS 01654 shall be given to the adoptive parent and any other signer of the agreement.

(JJ) CCDJFS shall not refuse to provide or arrange for services within its county to another PCSA on behalf of a special needs child when such services, if not provided, would cause a delay in the adoptive placement of a special needs child. Services shall include, but are not limited to:

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(1) Homestudy services.

(2) Prefinalization and postfinalization services.

(3) Services needed to provide the court with information required for adoption finalization.

(KK) CCDJFS shall not make an adoptive placement if the permanent custody of a child is under appeal through a court of appropriate jurisdiction or awaiting journalization of a court order.

(LL) If an applicant knowingly makes a false statement in the application or homestudy process, the custodial agency shall not present that family at the matching conference if the outcome of the agency review results in a reassessment of the homestudy pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(MM) All placement activities shall be in compliance with rules 5101:2-42-18.1 and 5101:2-48-13 of the Administrative Code and with the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.

(NN) If CCDJFS intends to place a child for adoption with an adoptive parent who resides in another county, it shall notify the PCSA in the county in which the parent resides of the impending placement. The notification shall be sent at least ten days prior to placement of a child. In the case of an infant placement, the notification may be prior to the birth of the child. This requirement does not apply to:

(1) An adoption by a step-parent whose spouse is a biological or adoptive parent of the minor to be adopted.

(2) An adoption where the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent resides is in a contract with the other agency to complete the adoptive homestudy.

(OO) The written notification required in paragraphs (LL) of this policy shall include the following information:

(1) The prospective adoptive child’s age.

(2) A description of the prospective adoptive child’s special needs.

(3) The name(s) and address of the prospective adoptive parents.

(4) The number of children that will reside in the prospective adoptive home once the prospective adoptive child is placed in the home.

Effective: 8/1/17
Provision of Information to a Prospective Adoptive Family Matched with a Specific Child  
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-15

(A) Prior to placing a child with the adoptive parent(s), CCDJFS shall provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with information about the child and any special needs of the child, identified or anticipated, and available resources to assist the prospective adoptive parent(s) in making an informed decision about the placement.

(B) Prior to the date of adoptive placement, CCDJFS shall, as applicable:

1. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the child study inventory. The information disclosed to the adoptive parent(s) shall include all background information available on the child in accordance with rule 5101:2-48-21 of the Administrative Code. All identifying information regarding the child's biological family shall be removed;

2. Provide the adoptive family with written information describing types of behavior that the prospective adoptive parent may anticipate from children who have experienced abuse and neglect, suggested interventions, and the post adoption services available if the child exhibits those types of behavior after adoption.

3. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with information regarding any child-specific financial and medical resources, known or anticipated, including subsidy information;

4. Provide the prospective adoptive parent with the child's lifebook;

5. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with materials the biological parents requested be given to the adopted person or adoptive parent(s), if authorization is given on the JFS 01693 “Ohio Law and Adoption Materials” (rev.5/2009).

6. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with photographs of the birth parents that the biological parent(s) requested be given to the adopted person or adoptive parent(s), if authorization is given on the JFS 01693.

7. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the biological parent's first name, if authorization is given on the JFS 01693.

8. Provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the child's social security number, if applicable;

(C) If a newborn child is placed from a hospital into an adoptive home, CCDJFS shall provide the information required in paragraph (B) of this rule to the adoptive parent(s) within thirty days of adoptive placement.
Prior to the adoptive placement, CCDJFS shall provide a written report to the adoptive parent(s) if the child has been adjudicated a delinquent for an act to which of any of the following offenses apply:

1. Aggravated murder,
2. Murder,
3. Voluntary manslaughter,
4. Involuntary manslaughter,
5. Felonious assault,
6. Aggravated assault,
7. Assault,
8. Rape,
9. Sexual battery,
10. Gross sexual imposition,
11. Conspiracy involving an attempt to commit aggravated murder or murder,
12. Any other offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult, and the child was found to be using or in possession of a firearm when the child committed the offense.
13. Any other offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult, and the child was found to be wearing or carrying body armor when the child committed the offense.

The written report required by paragraph (D) of this policy shall include the following information:

1. A descriptive summary of the child's social history.
2. Unless a child's record has been sealed pursuant to section 2151.356 of the Revised Code, a description of all the known acts committed by the child that resulted in the court making a disposition that the child is adjudicated delinquent. If the agency knows the child's record has been sealed, the prospective adoptive parents shall be informed in writing by the agency that the child's record of a prior delinquency adjudication has been sealed;
3. A description of any other violent act(s) committed by the child of which CCDJFS is aware;
4. The substantial and material conclusions and recommendations of any psychiatric or psychological examination conducted on the child.
(a) If no psychological or psychiatric examination of the child is available, CCDJFS shall include the substantial and material conclusions and recommendations of an examination to detect mental and emotional disorders conducted in compliance with the requirements of Chapter 4757 of the Revised Code by one of the following licensed professionals:

(i) An independent social worker.

(ii) A social worker.

(iii) A licensed professional clinical counselor.

(iv) A licensed professional counselor

(v) An independent marriage and family therapist.

(vi) A marriage and family therapist.

(b) CCDJFS shall not provide any part of the examination to the adoptive parent(s) other than the substantial and material conclusions and recommendations.

(F) Pursuant to section 2151.72 of the Revised Code, if a child has been adjudicated delinquent for any of the crimes listed in paragraph (D) of this policy, CCDJFS shall ensure that current psychological examination of the child has been conducted unless either of the following apply:

(1) A psychological examination of the child has been conducted within twelve months prior to the child’s placement in the adoptive home.

(2) A psychological examination of the child has been conducted within twenty four months prior to the date of the adoptive placement, when the foster caregiver seeks to adopt the foster caregiver’s foster child.

(G) If a current psychological examination was required to paragraph (F) of this policy, CCDJFS shall provide the prospective adoptive parent with the substantial and material conclusions and recommendations within sixty days of the date of the adoptive placement. CCDJFS shall not provide any part of a psychological, psychiatric, or mental and emotional disorder examination required by this policy to the prospective adoptive parent other than the substantial and material conclusions and recommendations.

(H) In accordance with sections 2152.72 and 2152.99 of the Revised Code, it is a minor misdemeanor for any person, including staff of CCDJFS to fail to provide the prospective adoptive parent(s) with the information required by paragraph (D) and (G) of this policy. It is not a violation of confidentiality to provide such information.

(I) If a custodial agency places a child who has been adjudicated delinquent for any of the offenses listed in paragraph (D) of this rule in a prospective adoptive home with the assistance of or by contracting with another agency, then all of the following apply:
(1) The custodial agency shall provide the other agency with the information outlined in paragraph (E) of this rule.

(2) The agency providing assistance to or contracting with CCDJFS shall provide CCDJFS with written acknowledgment that the agency received the information outlined in paragraph (E) of this rule and has provided that information to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

(3) CCDJFS shall keep the acknowledgment and provide a copy to the other agency.

(4) If CCDFS does not receive the acknowledgement, CCDJFS shall remain responsible for providing the prospective adoptive parents with information outlined in paragraph (E) of this policy.

(J) The adoptive family case record shall contain documentation of the information provided to the adoptive family and of the family's receipt of the information required of this policy.

(K) CCDJFS shall maintain in the following in the child's case record:

(1) The date information required by this rule was provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

(2) The JFS 01667 "Adoption Information Disclosure" containing the required signatures.

Effective: 9/01/15
Assessor Visits and Contacts with Children in Adoptive Homes Prior to Finalization

Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (17), 5101:2-48-17

(A) Visits and contacts shall be conducted by an assessor within CCDJFS that has full responsibility for the case planning and case management of the child’s case.

(1) If the assessor assigned to the child’s case is unable to complete the visit, the assessor from CCDJFS who is completing the visit shall document in the child’s case the reason someone other than the assigned assessor visited the child.

(2) The assessor assigned to the child’s case shall complete the majority of the required monthly visits.

(B) The frequency of visits with the child and the adoptive parent(s) shall be as follows:

(1) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first seven days of the placement, not including the date of placement.

(2) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first thirty days of placement, not including the visit during the first seven days of placement.

(3) After the first thirty days, at a minimum of one face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made monthly.

(4) If the circumstances of the case require more than one monthly visit, the additional visit(s) may be conducted by an assessor employed by an agency contracted by CCDJFS to provide services for the case.

(C) The frequency of visits with any other household member shall be as follows:

(1) At a minimum, one face-to-face visit in the home with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home shall be made every sixty days.

(2) At a minimum, two face-to-face visits in the home prior to finalization with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home although he or she may temporarily reside elsewhere. No less than sixty days between visits.

(D) During each visit, the assessor shall gather information on how the placement is progressing from the child, as appropriate to his or her ability to communicate, the adoptive parent(s) and other household members, in applicable visits. All contacts and visits shall be documented in the child's case record and address the following:

(1) The child’s safety and well-being within the adoptive home. In assessing the child’s safety and well-being, the assessor shall consider the following through observation and individualized interviews with each person obtained during the visit:

(a) The child's current behavior and emotional and social functioning in the adoptive home and any other settings.
(b) The child's adjustment to the placement.

(c) The child's feelings around loss, separation and the reasons for being adopt

(2) Any new information regarding the child, the adoptive parent(s) or the other household members, including, but not limited to:

(a) Changes in the marital status.

(b) Significant changes in the health status of a household member.

(c) Placement of additional children.

(d) Birth of a child.

(e) Death of a child or household member.

(f) A criminal charge, conviction or arrest of the child, adoptive parent(s) or any household member.

(g) Addition or removal of temporary or permanent household members.

(h) Family's relocation.

(i) Child's daily activities.

(j) A change in the adoptive parent(s) employment or any financial hardships.

(k) Any supportive services needs for the child or adoptive parent(s) to assure the child's safety and well-being.

(E) For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into an approved adoptive home outside of Ohio, CCDJS shall follow procedures pursuant to chapter 5101:2-52 of the Administrative Code and the regulations of the interstate compact, located at http://icpc.aphsa.org.content/AAICPC/en/ICPCRegulations.html.

(F) If the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly makes a false statement that results in the reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, the assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to procedures pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-13 of the Administrative Code.

(G) The assessor shall complete the JFS 01699 "ODJFS Prefinalization Adoption Assessment Report" (rev. 12/2006) prior to the issuance of a final decree of adoption or finalization of an interlocutory order of adoption. The report shall include the following information:

(1) Dates and location of contact with the adoptive parent(s), the child and all other household members according to this rule.

(2) Information regarding the child, adoptive parent(s) and all other household members' adjustment to the adoptive placement.
(3) Present and anticipated needs of the child, the adoptive parent(s) and all other household members for adoptive services, adoption subsidies assistance and Medicaid.

(4) Physical, mental and developmental condition of the child.

(5) Biological family background of the child, including identifying information about the biological or other legal parent(s), if known.

(6) Reasons for the child's placement with the adoptive parent(s) and the circumstances under which the child was placed in the home of the adoptive parent(s).

(7) Adoptive parent(s) and all household members' attitudes toward the proposed adoption.


(9) Prefinalization services which have been requested, provided or agreed upon.

(10) Prefinalization services planned, but not provided, and the reason the services were not provided.

(11) The child's psychological background, if known, including prior history of abuse and behavioral problems of the child.

(H) The assessor shall file the JFS 01699 with the court where the adoption petition is pending no later than twenty days prior to the date scheduled for the final hearing on the adoption unless the court determines there is good cause for filing the report at a later date.

(I) The assessor shall provide a copy of the JFS 01699 to the prospective adoptive parent(s) no later than twenty days prior to the date scheduled for the final hearing on the adoption. All identifying information about the biological or other legal parent(s) shall be deleted prior to providing a copy of this report to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

(J) CCDJFS shall maintain in the child's case record a copy of the JFS 01699 provided to the prospective adoptive parent(s), including the date the information was provided, and the prospective adoptive parent's written acknowledgment of receipt. The agency shall provide a copy of the acknowledgment of receipt to the prospective adoptive parent(s).

(K) The adoptive family case record shall contain a copy of the JFS 01699 provided to the adoptive family and written acknowledgment of the family's receipt of the information.

Effective: 1/1/16
Postfinalization Services
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (12), (B) (17) 5101:2-48-18

(A) Postfinalization adoption services in the form of counseling, case management and referral shall be made available upon the request of the birth parent, the adoptive parent, or the adoptee and may be provided directly or by referral. Post-finalization services are available to the above mentioned parties at anytime following finalization of an adoption.

(B) If CCDJFS is not able to directly provide a postfinalization adoption service, including open adoption services the agency shall:

1. Refer each person who requests postfinalization adoption services to an agency that provides such services;

2. Upon written request of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian, provide consultation on adoption-related issues to professionals who are working with the family.

3. Provide information regarding the procedures for releasing identifying information pursuant to rules 5101:2-48-19 and 5101:2-48-20 of the Administrative Code.

(C) If an adoptive parent, adoptee or birth parent contacts an agency for postfinalization adoption services and the agency determines that another agency made the adoptive placement, the agency may contact that agency for assistance in providing postfinalization services.

(D) If an adoptive parent, adoptee or birth parent is unable to access postfinalization adoption services, the PCSA located in the county of residence of the adoptive family, adoptee or birth parent, respectively, is the agency ultimately responsible for the provision of, or referral to, appropriate postfinalization services.

(E) When requested in writing, CCDJFS shall provide a notarized written statement verifying whether or not an adult, who consents to be adopted, was in CCDJFS’ custody on the date of their eighteenth birthday. The written verification will be provided to the adult who consented to be adopted, unless a release of information is provided requesting that the information be released to an identified third party.

**Effective: 10/1/14**
Agency Review Procedures
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (6), (B) (7) 5101:2-48-24, 5101:2-33-20

It is the policy of Clermont County Children's Services to provide the community with all of the services within the Department's mandate and to identify those complaints or concerns which allege that the mandated services are not being provided or that the services are not being provided in a manner which is in the best interest of the children in Clermont County. As a result, Clermont County Children's Services has developed a review procedure to review complaints from parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster care applicants, foster parents, kinship care providers, applicant or providers of approved adult-supervised living arrangements, prospective adoptive applicants, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents, and children concerning the provision of services and appeals by alleged perpetrators who disagree with the disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect.

 PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING A REVIEW

A parent, custodian, legal guardian, foster parent, foster care applicant, kinship care provider, applicant or provider of approved adult-supervised living arrangements, prospective adoptive applicant, adoptive applicant, adoptive parent, or child may request a review of agency action concerning the provision of services or an appeals by the alleged perpetrator who disagrees with the disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect by placing the request in writing to be submitted within thirty (30) days of the case disposition date. The request must state the facts which are the basis of the requested review. The complainant must also sign this written request.

A person who has a complaint must first attempt to resolve the problem with the caseworker. If that is unsuccessful, then the caseworker's supervisor must be contacted. If the complainant is still not satisfied with the result, then he or she should request a review in writing.

When a supervisor receives a complaint, he or she shall attempt to resolve the conflict. The supervisor shall also advise the complainant of the grievance policy and shall provide the person with a written copy of said policy if the party requests it.

EXCEPTIONS

No review hearing will be granted for the following issues:

- The placement or removal of a child pursuant to an order of the court
- Complaints which raise the sole issue of the validity of a law or of a written statewide policy
- The removal of a child due to a revocation of the foster home license or certificate
- The removal of a child who was voluntarily placed by a parent or guardian
- The removal of a child from foster care in order to place the child into an adoptive home
- Cases in which the parties have opportunity to have the issues decided by a court of law
THE REVIEW PROCESS
The review must be held within ten (10) working days from the date that the complaint was received by the agency unless waived by the complainant. Written notice of the date, time, and place of the review must be mailed to the complainant not less than five (5) calendar days prior to the review.

The Children’s Protective Services Deputy Director shall conduct all reviews unless the complaint involves the Deputy Director or there is some other conflict of interest. In such cases, the Director or his/her designee shall conduct the review.

At the face-to-face review, the complainant, the caseworkers, and the supervisors must all be given an opportunity to testify and to present their evidence. Any documents or physical evidence which are presented must be retained as part of the record. Only the parties and the reviewer may be present for the entire hearing. Any additional witnesses may only be present during their testimony.

THE DECISION
The Deputy Director or his/her designee, must render a written decision within ten (10) working days after the hearing has been held. The decision is final in regards to the case disposition in accordance with 5101:2-33-20 and must be based upon the evidence presented at the hearing and information contained in the file. A copy of the decision shall be provided to all parties to the agency review within fifteen days of the review. A copy of the decision shall be mailed to the complainant, placed in the case file and given to the caseworkers and supervisor. If any other party is involved in the case review, they too will be mailed a copy of the decision.

When an appeal of a disposition/resolution of report of child abuse or neglect is heard and the Deputy Director or his/her designee changes the original disposition/resolution, CPS shall update the statewide automated child welfare information system according to procedures contained in rule 5101:2-33-05 of the Administrative Code and notify the principals of the report in writing as to the revised report disposition.

The requirements contained in rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code supersede the requirements of rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code when the grievance or complaint involve alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to the foster care and adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO).

Effective: 8/01/17
Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (D) (2), 5101:2-42-18.1

Refer to JFS 1611, “Non-Discrimination Requirements for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements” located in the Appendix of this document.

Effective: 3/1/10
Standards of Conduct
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (C), 5101:2-33-11

Refer to “Standards of Conduct” located in the Appendix of this document.

Effective: 9/1/17
Procedure for Complaint Process of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the Foster Care or Adoption Process That Involve Race, Color or National Origin

Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (7), (B) (18), 5101:2-33-03

(A) CCDJFS shall provide a written notice of the procedure for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin (RCNO) to all individuals inquiring about or applying to be a foster caregiver or adoptive parent. Such notice shall be provided within seven days of the individual’s first contact with the agency. (See Appendix)

(B) Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a Public Children Services agency (PCSA), including CCDJFS, Private Child Placing agency (PCPA), Private Noncustodial Agency (PNA), or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS).

Any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way by a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or by ODJFS due to the individual making a complaint, testifying, assisting, or participating in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.

(C) The individual filing a complaint shall use the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form". (See Appendix) The complaint shall be filed within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice. The complaint may be filed with:

(1) CCDJFS (Attn: MEPA Monitor) or any other PCSA, PCPA or PNA; or,

(2) The ODJFS, ODJFS Bureau of Civil Rights

(3) US Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights

(D) When any complaint alleging discrimination involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process is received by:

(1) CCDJFS or any other PCSA, PCPA or PNA, the agency shall forward the complaint to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS within three working days of date of receipt of the complaint.
(2) ODJFS, shall notify the PCSA, PCPA, PNA that is the subject of the complaint within three working days of the receipt of the complaint.

(E) ODJFS shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. The PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint shall not initiate, conduct, or run concurrent investigations surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless approved by ODJFS.

(F) The PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint shall cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS not later than fourteen days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.

(G) ODJFS shall conduct an investigation that shall include, but is not limited to:

(1) Face-to-face interviews with the complainant, the respondent and all relevant witnesses.

(2) Issuance of a final investigation report to the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA or PNA that is the subject of the complaint. The report shall include the allegations, background information, analysis, determination and recommendations and shall be issued within ninety days of the receipt of the initial complaint.

If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, ODJFS will notify the complainant and the PCSA, PCPA, or PNA that is the subject of the complaint of the need for additional time.

(H) Upon completion of the final investigation report, ODJFS shall determine if any action against a PCSA, PCPA or PNA is warranted. For noncompliance by a PCSA, ODJFS may take any action permitted under section 5101.24 of the Revised Code. For noncompliance by a PCPA or PNA, ODJFS may take action concerning the agency's certificate pursuant to Chapter 5101:2-5 of the Administrative Code.

(I) No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA or PNA or who has testified, assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced, or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of the PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.

(J) Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an individual from filing a complaint with the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) alleging discrimination that involves RCNO in the foster care or adoption process of a PCSA, PCPA, PNA or ODJFS.

(K) The requirements of rules 5101:2-33-20 and 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code do not apply to complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO. The requirements of 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code apply in these situations.
(L) CCDJFS shall provide a written notice of the procedures for any complaints of discrimination in the foster care or adoption process that involve RCNO within thirty days of the effective date to all foster caregivers certified or in the process of certification and to all individuals who have approved adoptive homestudies or who are participating in the adoptive homestudy process on the effective date of this rule.

Effective: 7/01/15
Adoption Administrative Falsification Procedures
Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101-2-48-05 (B) (13), 5101:2-48-24 (F), 5101:2-33-13

(A) CCDJFS upon an internal investigation, shall refer all cases to the county prosecutor in which there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code.

(B) The CCDJFS assessor shall report in writing a person who knowingly makes a false statement on an application or homestudy document during the homestudy process to the agency administrator or designee within three days of the assessor’s determination of possible falsification. The written statement shall include, but is not limited to:

1. The original application completed by the applicant.
2. Documentation verifying the information reported on the application or in the homestudy by the applicant is knowingly false.

(C) CCDJFS shall within fourteen days of the determination of falsification, send a notification letter to the applicant indicating that the information submitted to the agency had been determined to be knowingly false. The notice shall include all of the following information:

1. Date notification letter is prepared by the assessor.
2. Mailing address of the applicant(s).
3. A statement indicating the homestudy process will discontinue because the agency has probable cause to believe the information provided by the applicant on the JFS 01691, "Application for the Placement of a Child" (rev. 6/2009) or during the homestudy process is knowingly false.
4. A copy of the information that is alleged knowingly false.
5. Documentation verifying the information submitted on the JFS 01691 or during the homestudy process that is knowingly false.
6. A statement indicating that all cases in which it is determined by the agency the applicant made knowingly false statements will be referred to the county prosecutor office in the county the applicant(s) reside.
7. The applicant(s) right to respond to the alleged falsification.
8. A statement indicating that if the applicant(s) fails to respond within the fourteen day period the applicant(s) application is withdrawn, and the action of refusing to respond to allegations of knowingly making false statement(s) has resulted in the applicant(s) selecting themselves out of continuing the homestudy process.
9. The notification letter shall be mailed to the applicant by certified mail.

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If the applicant responds within fourteen days of the date of receipt of the written notice alleging falsification, CCDJFS is responsible for reviewing information received from the adoptive applicant within twenty-one days of receipt of the applicant(s) response. CCDJFS shall conduct an internal investigation that shall include but not limited to:

(1) A face-to-face visit with the adoptive applicant, and all relevant witnesses, if available.

(2) Issuance of a final investigatory report to the adoptive applicant(s) that is the subject of the investigation no later than ten days after the agency review. The report shall include:

(a) the allegations

(b) relevant background information deemed appropriate by the agency

(c) the results of the investigation and recommendation of whether or not the agency found probable cause to indicate the applicant(s) made knowingly false statements on the application for child placement or during the homestudy.

(3) If unanticipated circumstances require additional time to complete the investigation or to issue the final report, CCDJFS shall notify the adoptive applicant that is the subject of the investigation of the need for additional time. The extension shall not be longer than fourteen days after the agency notifies the applicant(s) of the need for additional time to complete the investigatory report.

(E) CCDJFS shall provide written notification, within thirty days of receipt of the applicant(s) response, to the adoptive applicant of any action to be taken.

(F) Upon completion of the final investigation report and the agency determines there has been no falsification made by the applicant(s), CCDJFS shall resume the homestudy process if the applicant(s) chooses to proceed. The homestudy shall be completed within one hundred eighty days from recommencement.

(G) CCDJFS shall include in the adoptive family case record all documentation which supports the PCSA's action in determining the results and recommendation of the internal investigation.

(H) If an adoptive child is placed in an approved adoptive parent(s) home and the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly made a false statement that results in the assessor’s reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, the prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. The assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to the procedures pursuant to paragraphs (B), (C)(1) to (C)(7), (E), (F) and (G) of this rule.

(I) The agency administrator or designee must determine in twenty-four hours of completing the agency’s internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child’s safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parent(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.

**Effective: 10/1/15**
Description of State and Federal Adoption Assistance Programs Pursuant to Rule(s): 5101:2-48-05 (B) (14)

Adoption subsidies are intended to make it possible for children who are waiting because of age, race, handicap, need to be placed with siblings, or other special needs to be adopted.

Each county in Ohio is independently responsible for the administration of adoption subsidy programs. CCDJFS has developed an adoption subsidy guide which details the applications process in Clermont County and includes county forms used in the subsidy negotiation process.

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance
(Pursuant to OAC Rules 5101:2-33-18, 5101:2-49-01 through 5101:2-49-25)

Title IV-E Adoption Assistance was established to assist families in adopting special needs children who may not otherwise be adopted. Potential benefits under the AA program include a monthly maintenance payment, Medicaid coverage and eligibility for Title XX social services.

Determination of Title IV-E Adoption Assistance (AA) eligibility is a two-part process. The Department will first determine whether the adoptive parents and the child meet the requirements for “program eligibility” for AA. The following criteria will be used to determine initial “program eligibility” (OAC rule 5101:2-49-01 and 5101:2-49-02):

1. The child must be a special needs child (OAC 5101:2-49-03), and
2. The adoptive parents must be studied and approved for the adoptive placement of a specific special needs child by an agency with such authority, and
3. The child must meet the age requirement, and
4. There must be a signed “Adoption Assistance Agreement” between the PCSA and the adoptive parents prior to or at the time of the final decree of adoption, and
5. One of the following exits:
   (a) the child meets the ADC relatedness requirements and the judicial determination requirement; or
   (b) at the time the adoption petition is filed the child meets the requirements for SSI benefits as determined by a social security administration claims representative; or
   (c) the child’s placement costs are covered by FCM payments being made for his/her minor parent; or
   (d) a child previously determined eligible for AA in a prior adoption is also eligible in a subsequent adoption when the child is available for adoption due to:
      (i) the prior adoption dissolved and parental rights are terminated on or after October 1, 1997; or
      (ii) the child’s adoptive parent(s) died on or after October 1, 1997.
If the adoptive parents and the child meet all the criteria for initial “program eligibility”, the Department and the parents will negotiate the terms of an initial Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Agreement. The AA agreement shall specify at a minimum the terms outlined in OAC rule 5101:2-49-06. Negotiations for the AA agreement shall proceed as follows:

1. The adoptive parent and the adoption worker will discuss in detail the overall capacity of the parents to meet the child’s immediate and future needs, as well as the ability of the parents to incorporate the child into the household relative to the lifestyle, standard of living and future plans of the parents. The need for a monthly AA payment and/or assistance with special services will be included in the discussion. The adoption worker will provide the parents with the necessary state forms to make an AA application and if necessary assist in completing the forms.

2. If the adoptive parents and the adoption worker agree that the family does not need an AA payment and/or special services at the present time to meet the child’s needs, then the Department will initiate an “Agreement Only” AA agreement with no payment. The AA agreement is subject to modification at the request of the adoptive parents or the Department. If the circumstances or needs of the child and/or family change, the agreement may be modified to include an AA payment and/or provision for services as negotiated by the Department and the parents. (OAC 5101:2-49-07)

3. If the family will need financial assistance to meet the child’s needs or to incorporate the child into their family, the parents shall submit their request for assistance in writing to the agency. A questionnaire will be provided to assist with the written request. The written request shall include:
   
   a) the amount ($) of monthly assistance the parents feel is necessary to meet the child’s special needs, and

   b) the type of special services the child requires and the anticipated total cost of such services, and

   c) written professional recommendation for requested special services related to medical and/or therapeutic needs, and

   d) any additional information or documentation requested by the Department.

4. The Department will review the written request and determine whether the request reflects the child’s needs and the particular circumstances of the adoptive family.

5. CCDJFS will agree to provide an AA payment and/or assistance with special services when it is determined that the child’s needs and the family circumstances necessitate such assistance.

6. The amount of an AA payment will be negotiated based on the following criteria:
   
   a) the child’s special needs as documented by qualified professionals;

   b) the individual circumstances of the adoptive family and their ability to accommodate the needs of the child;
c) the current federal and nonfederal limits of financial participation for AA payments provided by ODJFS;

d) the availability of county funds to supplement the financial share of AA payments provided by ODJFS.

7. CCDJFS will notify the adoptive parents in writing of all determinations regarding AA eligibility and benefits. The adoptive parents have the right to request a county conference if they do not agree with the initial determination. Per 5101:2-49-05 of the Administrative Code, Adoptive parent(s) also have the right to request a state mediation conference within thirty calendar days from the initial negotiation determination utilizing the JFS 01470 "Adoption Assistance State Mediation Conference Request" (rev.1/2014). If CCDJFS and the adoptive parent(s) cannot mutually agree on a monthly AA payment amount at the state mediation conference, the adoptive parent(s) may request a state hearing by contacting CCDJS or ODJFS, Bureau of State Hearings.

Children who are determined eligible for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance are also eligible for Medicaid as long as a Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Agreement remains in effect (OAC 5101:2-49-06). Title IV-E Adoption Subsidies are subject to a mandatory annual review which is conducted by CCDJFS. Parents are required to cooperate with all aspects of the review process or there may be a proposal made to suspend or terminate the adoption subsidy.

State Adoption Subsidy
(Pursuant to OAC Rules 5101:2-44-03 through 5101: 2-44-12)

Through maintenance subsidy payments and/or special service subsidy payments the state adoption subsidy program is designed to assist qualified adoptive parents in adopting a special needs child when the needs of the child are beyond the economic ability and resources of the adoptive parents. State subsidies are intended to support and sustain the adoptive placement after finalization of the adoption. A state adoption subsidy may include Medicaid coverage for those children who meet the Medicaid eligibility criteria for adoption subsidy recipients. ODJFS has discontinued the State Adoption Special Services Subsidy program effective July 1, 2004 and left it to individual counties to decide whether to continue their existing Special Service agreements. CCDJFS has elected to continue those State Adoption Special Service agreements in effect prior to July 1, 2004. CCDJFS will not enter into any new State Adoption Special Service Subsidy agreements after July 1, 2004.

The following criteria will be used to establish the eligibility of the child and the adoptive parent for the state adoption subsidy program(OAC rule 5101:2-44-03 and 5101:2-44-06):

1. The child is identified as a special needs child, as defined in OAC rule 5101:2-44-06; is legally free for adoption; meets the age requirement;

2. The parents are approved for adoptive placement by an agency with such authority (PCSA, PCPA,) and an adoptive placement agreement has been signed;

3. The parents have applied and been determined ineligible for the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance program;
4. The parents are capable of providing the permanent parental relationship needed by the child except that it would not be in the child’s best interest to accept the child as a member of their family without provisions for meeting the child’s special needs;

5. The needs of the child are beyond the economic resources of the adoptive family.

If initial eligibility criteria is satisfied, the adoptive parents shall complete and submit to CCDJFS the necessary state forms and financial statements for the state adoption subsidy program. The parents will also provide the necessary verifications of income to establish financial eligibility. If the family will need financial assistance to meet the child’s needs or to incorporate the child into their family, the parents shall submit their request for assistance in writing to CCDJFS. The written request shall include:

1. The amount ($) of monthly assistance the parents feel is necessary to meet the child’s special needs. A questionnaire is provided to assist with the written request.
2. The type of special services the child requires and the anticipated total cost of such services;
3. Written professional recommendation for requested special services related to medical and/or therapeutic needs, and
4. Any additional information or documentation requested by the Department.

CCDJFS will review the written request and determine whether the request reflects the needs of the child and the circumstances of the family. CCDJFS will agree to provide maintenance through a State Adoption Subsidy when it is determined that the needs of the child and circumstances of the family necessitate such assistance. The terms of all State Adoption Maintenance Subsidies and State Adoption Special Service Subsidies will be contingent upon the availability of state funds, and the availability of county funds to supplement those state funds. For the beginning of each state fiscal year, the Ohio Department of Job and Family services (ODJFS) shall issue a procedure letter that identifies the maximum monthly funding level for SAMS. If CCDJFS negotiates a payment in excess of the maximum SAMS payment identified in the procedure letter, CCDJFS shall enter into a separate county agreement with the adoptive parent for a county adoption maintenance subsidy (CAMS).

When determined necessary, CCDJFS may approve a State Adoption Maintenance payment if:

1. The parent’s income does not exceed one hundred twenty percent of the median income of a family of the same size, including the adoptive child, as the median income was most recently determined for this state pursuant to division (B) of section 5153.163 of the Revised Code, and
2. The parents verify the family gross income by providing the most recent IRS income tax documentation, proof of social security benefits, proof of workers compensation, proof of pension benefits, or any other documentation requested by the Department

Adoptive parents will be notified in writing regarding their eligibility for State Adoption Subsidy. Adoptive parents have the right to a state hearing if they disagree with any decision made by CCDJFS regarding their eligibility for State Adoption Subsidy(OAC 5101:2-47-07). State Adoption Subsidy benefits are subject to a mandatory annual review which is conducted by CCDJFS. The family must meet the gross income requirement at each yearly review. If the family income exceeds the maximum allowable at any review, the adoption subsidy will be suspended. Parents are required to cooperate with all aspects of the review process or the adoption subsidy may be suspended or terminated (OAC 5101:2-44-08).
Medicaid Eligibility for State Adoption Subsidy Recipients
(Pursuant to OAC Rule 5101:2-44-05.1)

A child in receipt of State Adoption Subsidy can be eligible for Medicaid based only on the child’s income, resources, and special needs for medical, mental health, or rehabilitative care. Effective July 1, 2004 the Department must determine that at the time of adoptive placement, the child has a medical necessity as defined in rule 5101:3-1-01. The medical necessity must include at least one of the following needs or circumstances that is a barrier to the adoptive placement without medical assistance because the child;

1. Has a medical condition, physical impairment, mental retardation, or developmental disability; or

2. Has been diagnosed with a mental disorder as characterized by a behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunction; or

3. Has been diagnosed with a substance-related disorder.

For a child who has an approval for State Adoption Subsidy entered into on or after July 1, 2004, Medicaid eligibility is contingent upon all of the following:

1. A finding by CCDJFS that the child has a medical necessity as outlined above, and

2. The parents are eligible for a state adoption maintenance subsidy, and


For a child who has a State Adoption Subsidy entered into prior to July 1, 2004 the eligibility for Medicaid will continue based on the criteria outlined in OAC Rule 5101:2-44-05.1.

CCDJFS will notify the adoptive parents in writing of all determinations regarding State Adoption Subsidy eligibility and Medicaid benefits. The parents have the right to request a state hearing if they disagree with a determination made by CCDJFS. CCDJFS will provide the adoptive parents with information regarding the procedures for requesting a state hearing.

Reimbursement for Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses
(Pursuant to Rule(s) 5101:2-49-21)

Reimbursement for Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses is a Federal program designed to provide reimbursement of up $1,000 for nonrecurring expenses which are directly related to the legal adoption of a child.
child with special needs (5101:2-49-03). They include reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by or on behalf of the adoptive parents. These would include:

1. Reasonable and necessary adoption fees;
2. Attorneys’ fees and court costs;
3. The adoption study, including health and psychological examination
4. Supervision of the placement;
5. Transportation costs and reasonable costs of lodging and food for the child and/or the adoptive parent(s) when necessary to complete the adoption process;
6. Other nonrecurring expenses subject to prior approval by ODJFS which are directly related to the adoption of a special needs child and which meet the conditions set forth in this rule.

The current maximum for nonrecurring cost subsidy is $1,000 per child. Stepparents are not eligible for nonrecurring cost subsidies if a biological parent is present in the home.

In order for CCDJFS to enter into an agreement for the reimbursement of non-recurring adoption expenses the child must be determined a child with special needs. A child is considered special needs if all three of the following criteria are met:

1. CCDJFS has determined that the child cannot or should not be returned to the home of his parents. This determination shall be made based on the CCDJFS’ verification of the existence of one of the following:
   
   (a) An order from a court of competent jurisdiction terminating parental rights, or;
   
   (b) A petition for the termination of parental rights, or;
   
   (c) A signed relinquishment by the birth parents.

2. CCDJFS has determined that the child meets the special needs criteria, as defined in paragraph (B) of rule 5101:2-49-03 of the Administrative Code, which prevent the child from being placed with adoptive parents without providing Title IV-E adoption assistance or Title XIX medical assistance. The child need not meet other categorical eligibility requirements of Title IV-E adoption assistance. If all other eligibility criteria are met, and the only special needs factor is the child has been determined to be at substantial risk, with no manifestation of a special needs factor, the child is not eligible for nonrecurring adoption assistance.

3. CCDJFS has determined that in each case a reasonable but unsuccessful effort was made to place the child with appropriate parents without providing adoption assistance. The determination shall be made by reviewing specific documentation of the efforts to place the child with the prospective adoptive parents without providing adoption assistance.
The costs of adoption services provided by an agency to adoptive parent(s) for which no charge is made are not eligible for payment or reimbursement under Rule 5101:2-49-21.

No income eligibility requirement (means test) shall be applied to adoptive parent(s) in determining whether payments for nonrecurring adoption expenses shall be made.

The JFS1421, "Application for Reimbursement of Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses" must be submitted to CCDJFS for approval at least fifteen days prior to finalization. The JFS 01421 cannot be approved retroactively.

If a Title IV-E adoption assistance agreement has not been executed, the adoptive parent(s) shall submit the JFS 01421 "Application for Reimbursement of Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses" for payment or reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses to CCDJFS if they are residents of Clermont County at least fifteen days prior to the issuance of a final decree of adoption. At the time of application, the adoptive parent(s) shall provide CCDJFS with a copy of the JFS 01616 "Social and Medical History" completed on the child for whom the request for reimbursement is being made and a copy of the applicant's completed JFS 01673 "Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement" (homestudy) or equivalent, and the 1673A Child Characteristic Checklist. CCDJFS shall deny a family’s application based on the applicant’s failure to produce a JFS 01616, or a JFS 01673a and JFS 1673 or its equivalent. In addition, the applicant shall provide documentation to assist in the determination of eligibility if a Public children services agency (PCSA) or a Private child placing agency (PCPA) does not hold custody of the child. The documentation must be submitted to CCDJFS at least fifteen days prior to the issuance of a final decree of adoption.

Per Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-49-21 (S) (1) no payment may be made to parents with respect to a child who meets the requirements specified but who is not a citizen or resident of the United States and was adopted outside of the United States or was brought into the United States for the purpose of being adopted.

When JFS 01453 "Adoption Assistance Agreement" is in effect with CCDJFS, application for payment or reimbursement of nonrecurring adoption expenses shall be made to CCDJFS. The JFS 01438 shall be incorporated as an addendum to the JFS 01453 as described in rule 5101:2-47-36 of the Administrative Code.

In order to receive reimbursement for nonrecurring expenses incurred in the adoption of a special needs child, adoptive parent(s) shall submit to CCDJFS a request for reimbursement and proof of the expenditures within two years of the final decree of adoption.

When siblings are placed for adoption, either together or separately, each child should be treated as an individual. A separate JFS 1438 shall be executed for each child, and ODJFS shall make payment or reimbursement for such expenses available up to two thousand dollars for each child.

The state hearing policies and procedures contained in Chapters 5101:6-1 through 5101:6-9 of the Administrative Code apply to individuals applying for benefits under this rule.
Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS)
(Pursuant to OAC Rule 5101:2-44-13.1)

Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) is a state funded, county administered subsidy created by Ohio to assist eligible adoptive families in receiving special services. PASSS is intended to support families when other financial resources are not available. Eligible are families in which the child who, after the adoption is legalized, develops needs related to pre-existing conditions or related to the adoption process itself. Unlike other subsidy programs, families are not eligible for a monthly stipend through this program. PASSS funds are to be used for family preservation services for an adoptive child residing in the home; services that will reduce serious physical or psychological risk for the child or others; and medical services designed to relieve or correct preadoptive health care problems.

To be eligible for PASSS, all of the following requirements must be met (OAC 5101:2-44-13.1):

1. The child/family resides with his or her parent(s) in the county in which the application is made.

2. The child has a physical, developmental, mental or emotional condition which developed after the adoption petition was filed and can be directly attributed to factors in the child’s preadoptive background or medical history, or biological family’s background or medical history.

3. The child has been adopted by someone other than a stepparent.

4. The child meets either of the following requirements:
   (a) The child is under the age of eighteen; or
   (b) The child is at least eighteen years of age and less than twenty-one years of age and is mentally or physically handicapped as defined in rule 5101:2-1-01 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

5) Other sources of assistance are inadequate or are unavailable to meet the child’s immediate needs.

The application for PASSS shall consist of the following:

1. A completed JFS 01050 “Application/Agreement for a Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy”

2. A clear written statement of the child’s special need. Such statement must be supported by an assessment or evaluation from a qualified professional. The assessment must include the professional’s opinion as to the origin of the problem, past history, prognosis and recommendations related to future treatment needs. The qualified professional is defined as on Ohio licensed or certified counselor, physician, psychiatrist, and psychologist or licensed independent social worker (LISW). The LISW may not be an employee of the custodial agency or the agency providing post adoption special services to the child. The diagnosis of handicap or condition must be within the professional’s area of expertise.

3. A written statement that clearly indicates why the requested services in not within the resources of the family, a copy of the JFS 01681 “Applicant Financial Statement”, and a copy of the family’s most recent IRS 1040.

4. A listing of community resources, as outlined on the JFS 01050, that have been contacted including the dates and results of those contacts.

5. A copy of the relevant provisions in any public or private health insurance policy held by the family regarding the child’s eligibility for services and the services that are covered in the policy.

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Within forty-five days of submission of the application, CCDJFS’s post adoption subsidy review committee shall approve or deny the application. Within three days of the Department’s decision, CCDJFS will provide written notification indicating level of funding, or denial with information on how to request a State Hearing. If the application does not include required documentation, CCDJFS must return the application to the parents within fifteen days of receipt.

Approved services must address the child’s physical or developmental handicap or mental or emotional condition that either existed before the adoption petition was filed; or developed after the adoption petition was filed and can be attributed to factors in the child’s preadoptive background, medical history, or the biological family’s background or medical history. PASSS funds may be used for the reasonable costs of any of the following services:

1. Medical and surgical services which may include respite care if required by medical or surgical needs and determined necessary by a qualified professional. Respite care services shall not exceed two thousand four hundred dollars per child per SFY, and must be administered by an independent provider residing outside the home and not related to the applicant. The Department may at its discretion approve a relative provider because of special circumstances. Medical and surgical services shall not include the cost of orthodontia.

2. Psychiatric, psychological, and counseling services, which may include respite care if required by psychiatric, psychological or counseling needs. Respite services shall not exceed two thousand four hundred dollars per child per SFY, and must be administered by an independent provider residing outside the home and not related to the applicant. The Department may at its discretion approve a relative provider because of special circumstances.

3. Residential treatment services if required by psychiatric, psychological or counseling needs and approved by a qualified professional. These services may include maintenance costs as long as the costs are included as part of a residential treatment program. Residential treatment services shall not include the cost of educational services.

No more than ten thousand dollars shall be approved for any one child in one State Fiscal Year (SFY) except in the following circumstances:

1. Family income and resources are substantially decreased due to involuntary loss of employment and the family has completed the JFS 01051 “Application for Additional Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) Funding for Extraordinary Circumstances”; or

2. A qualified professional recommends residential treatment, in-patient hospitalization, or therapeutic foster care to prevent disruption of the adoption. The recommendation must be submitted with the JFS 01051.

Adoptive parent(s) who receive PASSS funds shall pay at least five per cent of the total cost of all services provided to the child. The Department may waive the five per cent requirement of the gross income of the family is not more than two hundred per cent of the poverty guideline. The Department shall decide how the five per cent copay will be collected from the family.

In the event state funding is no longer available, the PASSS program will close to new applications until July 1 of the following SFY. Once state funds have been exhausted neither ODJFS nor CCDJFS may be held responsible for payment of services for applications that have not been approved.

CCDJFS shall not approve PASSS funding for any of the following:

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1) Educational services such as tuition and tutoring;

2) Dental and/or orthodontia services;

3) Medical co-payments, prescriptions or insurance or insurance deductibles;

4) Camp and any recreational services;

5) Travel related expenses such as mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, etc. and automobile purchases and repairs, not including specific types of vehicle modifications that are related to the child’s special needs;

6) Computer equipment, including software

7) Child care services;

8) Services provided by a PCSA or PCPA to make arrangements for adoptive placements;

9) Services that are equivalent to or of greater benefit to other family members, not including family counseling and respite;

10) Services to a child for whom a parent-child relationship does not exist;

11) Services that facilitate contact with a parent whose rights are terminated;

12) Services for a child in the custody of a PCSA or PCPA; or

13) Legal fees to finalize an adoption or for any other legal action.
State Adoption Assistance Loan Fund
(Pursuant to OAC Rule: 5101:2-44-14)

(A) The state adoption assistance loan fund provides loans to prospective adoptive parents residing in Ohio to cover adoption expenses incurred by, or on behalf of, a prospective adoptive parent and for which the prospective adoptive parent carries the ultimate liability for payment.

(B) The state adoption assistance loan fund will be administered through a financial institution or institutions approved by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The financial institution or institutions shall set the loan repayment terms, the procedures for collection of loan arrearages, and any monetary penalties for loan arrearages or improper use of loan funds.

(C) If the child being adopted resides in Ohio, the prospective adoptive parents may receive up to three thousand dollars from the state adoption assistance loan fund.

(D) If the child being adopted does not reside in Ohio, the prospective adoptive parents may receive up to two thousand dollars from the state adoption assistance loan fund.

(E) CCDJFS shall inform prospective adoptive parents who inquire about adoption services through the agency that the state adoption assistance loan is available.

(F) In order to be eligible for a state adoption assistance loan, a prospective adoptive parent shall meet the following requirements at the time of application:

(1) Have one of the following approved homestudies:
   (a) A JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 6/2011) or equivalent for children adopted from another state.
   (b) A JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child" (rev. 06/2009).
   (c) A copy of a homestudy narrative report in the case of an international adoption.

(2) Have been matched with an identified child who is legally free for adoption and who will be adopted prior to their eighteenth birthday.

(3) Have applied for the state adoption assistance loan prior to finalization of the adoption.

(G) In addition to the requirements outlined in paragraph (F), a prospective adoptive parent must also meet the requirements of the financial institution administering the state adoption assistance loan fund.

(H) If a prospective adoptive parent is interested in applying for a state adoption assistance loan, CCDJFS shall provide the prospective adoptive parent with documentation, on agency letterhead, indicating the requirements outlined above have been met.

(I) In the case of a private or an international adoption, the prospective adoptive parent shall obtain the documentation outlined in paragraph (F) of this rule from the agency which completed their homestudy.
(J) Once the prospective adoptive parent has obtained the required documentation, the prospective adoptive parent shall:

(1) Provide the documentation to the financial institution.

(2) Complete the financial institution’s application for the state adoption assistance loan.

(K) The state adoption assistance loan shall be used for adoption services which are reasonable and necessary such as adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, and other expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child as defined in paragraph (L) of this rule. These expenses cannot be incurred in violation of state or federal law and cannot be reimbursed from other sources or funds.

(L) Other adoption expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child refers to the cost of the adoption incurred by or on behalf of the adoptive parent(s) and for which the adoptive parent(s) carries the ultimate liability for payment. These expenses can include, but are not limited to, costs related to:

(1) The adoption homestudy.

(2) Health and psychological examinations.

(3) Supervision of the placement prior to the final decree of adoption.

(4) Reasonable cost of transportation, lodging, and food for the child and/or adoptive parent(s) when necessary to complete the placement or adoption process.

Effective Date: 9/15/14
Appendix
The Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services (CCDJFS) has established the following Standards of Conduct with regard to the performance of employees and contractors/providers related to compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Aug 20, 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA), and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as they apply to the foster care and adoption process. These Standards of Conduct prohibit policies, procedures or actions which serve to:

- Deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved; or
- Delay or deny any placement of a child in foster care or for adoption on the basis of the race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver(s), of the adoptive parent(s) or of the child involved.

Permissible Actions:
MEPA and Title VI permit the following actions as they apply to the foster care or adoption process:

1. Asking about and honoring any initial or subsequent choices made by prospective foster or adoptive parents regarding what race, color, or national origin of child the prospective foster or adoptive parents will accept.
2. Honoring the decision of a child twelve years of age or older to not consent to an adoption unless the court finds that the adoption is in the best interest of the child and the child's consent is not required.
3. Providing information and resources about fostering or adopting a child of another race, color or national origin to prospective foster or adoptive parents who request such information and making known to all families that such information and resources are available.
4. Considering the request of a birth parent(s) to place the child with a relative or non-relative identified by name.
5. Considering the race, color or national origin of the child as a possible factor in the placement decision when compelling reasons serve to justify that race, color or national origin need to be a factor in the placement decision pursuant to 5101:2-48-13 and 5101:2-42-18.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code. These rules permit consideration of race, color or national origin if an Individualized Child Assessment (JFS 01688) completed pursuant to these rules indicates the child has needs related to race, color or national origin that should be taken into account when placing the child. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to race, color, or national origin, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.
6. Promoting cultural awareness, including awareness of cultural and physical needs that may arise in the care of children of different races, ethnicities, and national origins.
origins as part of the training which is required of all applicants who seek to become foster or adoptive parents.

7. Documenting verbal comments, verbatim, or describing in detail any other indication made by a prospective foster or adoptive family member living in the household or any other person living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the race, color or national origin of a child for whom the prospective foster or adoptive family has expressed an interest in fostering or adopting. The documentation shall indicate whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for all foster and adoptive applicants. Documentation shall be included in the family's homestudy, update, or an addendum to the homestudy or update prior to consideration of placement or a matching conference. A matching conference is the process of determining the most appropriate adoptive family for the child based on the child's special needs. The matching committee may consider the information in determining if the placement is in the child's best interests.

**Prohibited Actions:**
MEPA and Title VI prohibit the following actions as they apply to the foster care or adoption process:

1. Using the race, color or national origin of a prospective foster or adoptive parent to differentiate between placements.
2. Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with prospective foster or adoptive parent(s) of a specific race, color or national origin, unless the birth parent(s) identifies a relative or non-relative by name and that person is found to meet all relevant state child protection standards, provided that the agency determines that the placement is in the best interests of the child.
3. Requiring a prospective adoptive family to prepare or accept a transracial adoption plan.
4. Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for race, color or national origin.
5. Delaying or denying placement of a child based upon the geographical location of the neighborhood of the prospective foster or adoptive family whenever geography is being used as a proxy for:
   - the racial or ethnic composition of the neighborhood;
   - the demographics of the neighborhood; or
   - the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular race, color, or national origin in the neighborhood or any similar purpose.
6. Requiring extra scrutiny, additional training, or greater cultural awareness of individuals who are prospective foster or adoptive parents of children of a different race, color or national origin than required of other prospective foster or adoptive parents.
7. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular race, color or national origin.
8. Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective foster or adoptive parents of a particular race, color or national origin to care for or nurture the sense of identity of a child of another race, color, or national origin.
9. "Steering" prospective foster or adoptive parents away from parenting a child of another race, color, or national origin. "Steering" is any activity that attempts to discourage prospective foster or adoptive parents from parenting a child of a particular race, color or national origin.
10. Requiring an ongoing, foster care or adoption worker or contractor to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's foster caregiver or adoptive parent.

**Prohibition on Retaliation:**
CCDJFS employees and contractors/providers may not intimidate, threaten, coerce, discriminate against or otherwise retaliate against any individual who makes a complaint, testifies, assists or participates in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process.

**Additional Information:**
Employees or contractors/providers who desire more information about MEPA and Title VI as related to the adoption and foster care process may contact:
- Gretchen Behimer, CCDJFS MEPA Monitor
  (513) 732-7860

**MEPA Complaint Procedure:**
Any person who believes that CCDJFS, any other public or private Ohio adoption or foster care agency, or the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has policies or procedures that violate MEPA and Title VI may file a complaint. In addition, anyone who believes that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated against in some way because he or she made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation related to alleged discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in the foster care or adoption process may also file a complaint. Individuals who may file a complaint include but are not limited to the following:
- a foster or adoptive parent or other member of a foster or adoptive family
- a prospective foster or adoptive parent or other family member
- an employee or former employee of CCDJFS or of any other Ohio adoption or foster care agency

Individuals who wish to file a complaint must complete the “Discrimination Complaint Form” (JFS 02333) and file the complaint within two years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy, or practice. This complaint may be filed with any of the following:

- Clermont County Department of Job and Family Services
  Attn: Gretchen Behimer, MEPA Monitor
  2400 Clermont Center Drive
  Batavia, OH 45103

- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
  Bureau of Civil Rights
  30 E. Broad Street, 37th floor
  Columbus, OH 43266-0423

- US Health and Human Services Office of Civil Rights
  701 West 51st Street, Suite 104, MC W-206,
  Austin TX 78751.
• Any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency

If the complaint is filed with CCDJFS’s MEPA Monitor or with any other public or private Ohio foster care or adoption agency, the MEPA Monitor or other public or private agency must forward the complaint within 3 business days to the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS for investigation. ODJFS must complete the investigation within 90 days of receipt of the complaint, unless unusual circumstances prevent it from completing the investigation within that timeframe. ODJFS will provide a copy of the investigation report to the complainant and to the agency that is the subject of the complaint.

**Enforcement Requirements:**
These standards of conduct include enforcement requirements to be used whenever an agency employee or contractor/provider engages in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color, or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by the Bureau of Civil Rights of ODJFS upon completion of the investigation conducted pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code.

For CCDJFS employees, these enforcement requirements shall include standards governing penalties, sanctions and other disciplinary actions in accordance with either Sections 6.12 through 6.15 of the Clermont County Board of County Commissioners Personnel Policy Manual or Article 8 of the collective bargaining agreement between CCDJFS and AFSCME Local 3536.

For contractors/providers performing foster care or adoption services on behalf of CCDJFS, these enforcement requirements shall include standards governing penalties, sanctions and other disciplinary actions in accordance with the contractor/provider’s personnel policy and may include contract termination. Enforcement requirements for contractor/provider subcontractors shall include corrective action in accordance with the contractor/provider’s contract with the subcontractor and may include contract termination.

These enforcement requirements are applied in accordance with applicable employment law and union contracts.

**Corrective Action Plan:**
CCDJFS shall provide for the submission of a corrective action plan whenever an investigation conducted by ODJFS, pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, results in a finding that an agency employee or contractor/provider engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices. If the finding involves a discriminatory act, policy or practice by a contractor/provider or subcontractor, CCDJFS shall develop the corrective action plan in collaboration with the contractor/provider or in collaboration with the contractor/provider and subcontractor.

The corrective action plan shall:
• Address how CCDJFS will prevent future violations by that employee or contractor/provider or subcontractor, and
• Be submitted to ODJFS within thirty days of notification of the findings of the investigation.

CCDJFS shall provide a copy of these Standards of Conduct to each employee or contractor/provider who is:
• Engaged in the placement of children into foster care or for adoption, or
- Engaged in the recruitment, assessment, approval, or selection of foster or adoptive families.

New employees or contractors/providers shall receive a copy of the written Standards of Conduct within thirty days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract. CCDJFS and contractors/providers shall ensure that these Standards of Conduct are provided to their employees and subcontractors.

CCDJS shall not require an ongoing, foster care or adoption worker to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's foster caregiver or adoptive parent.

(Revised: 9/1/17)
The Multiethnic Placement Act, Oct. 20, 1994, P.L. 103-382, as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, Aug. 20, 1996, P.L. 104-188 (MEPA) and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process, are designed to decrease the time children wait for foster care and adoption placement, prevent discrimination in the placement of children, and aid in the identification and recruitment of foster and adoptive families who can meet each child's needs. They prohibit any agency using federal funds from denying any person the opportunity to become an adoptive parent or foster caregiver on the basis of race, color or national origin (RCNO) of that person, or of the child involved and from delaying or denying the placement of a child for adoption or foster care on the basis of race, color or national origin of the adoptive parent or parents, of the foster caregiver or caregivers, or the child involved.

Under MEPA and Title VI, no agency may routinely consider RCNO as a factor in assessing the needs or best interests of children. In each case, the only consideration shall be the child's individual needs and the ability of the prospective foster caregiver or adoptive parent to meet those needs. Only the most compelling reasons may serve to justify consideration of RCNO as part of a placement decision. Such reasons emerge only in the unique and individual circumstances of each child and each prospective foster caregiver or adoptive parent. In those exceptional circumstances when RCNO needs to be taken into account in a placement decision, such consideration must be narrowly tailored to advance the child's best interest. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to RCNO, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.

The following actions by a PCSA, PCPA, or PNA are permitted under MEPA and Title VI:

- Asking about and honoring any choice made by prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents regarding the child’s RCNO the prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents will accept.

- Honoring the decision of a child over 12 years of age to not consent to an adoption, unless the court finds that the adoption is in the best interest of the child and the child’s consent is not required.

- Providing information and resources about adopting a child of another RCNO to prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents who request such information and making known to all families that such information and resource are available.

- Considering the request of a birth parent(s) to place the child with a relative or nonrelative identified by name.

This form is used in compliance with the Ohio Administrative Code rules 5101:2-48-05 and 5101:2-42-18.1
• Considering the RCNO of the child as a possible factor in the placement decision when compelling reasons serves to justify that RCNO needs to be a factor in the placement decision. Even when the facts of a particular case allow consideration related to RCNO, this consideration shall not be the sole determining factor in the placement decision.

• Promoting cultural awareness, including awareness of cultural and physical needs that may arise in the care of children of different races, ethnicities, and national origins as part of the training which is required of all applicants who seek to become foster caregivers or adoptive parents.

• Documenting verbal comments, verbatim, or documenting in detail any other indication made by a prospective foster caregiver or prospective foster caregiver family member or prospective adoptive parent or prospective adoptive family member living in the household reflecting a negative perspective regarding the RCNO of a child for whom they have expressed an interest in fostering or adopting and indicating whether those comments were made before or after completion of the cultural diversity training which is required for prospective foster care and adoptive applicants.

The following are examples of actions prohibited under MEPA and Title VI:

• Using the RCNO of a prospective foster caregiver or prospective adoptive parent to differentiate between adoptive placements for a child.

• Honoring the request of a birth parent(s) to place a child with a prospective foster caregiver of a prospective adoptive parent of a specific RCNO.

• Requiring a prospective foster caregiver or prospective adoptive family to prepare or accept a transracial foster care or adoption plan. Using "culture" or "ethnicity" as a proxy for RCNO.

• Delaying or denying placement of a child based upon the geographical location of the neighborhood of the prospective foster caregiver or a prospective adoptive family whenever geography is being used as a proxy for the racial composition of the neighborhood, the demographics of the neighborhood, the presence or lack of presence of a significant number of persons of a particular RCNO in the neighborhood or any similar purpose.

• Requiring extra scrutiny, additional training, or greater cultural awareness of individuals who are prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents of children of a different RCNO than required of other prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents.

• Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the needs of children of a particular RCNO.
- Relying upon general or stereotypical assumptions about the ability of prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents of a particular RCNO to care for or nurture the sense of identity of a child of a different RCNO.

- "Steering" prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents away from parenting a child of a different RCNO. “Steering” is any activity that attempts to discourage prospective foster caregivers or prospective adoptive parents from parenting a child of a particular RCNO.