

**Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services  
(CCDCFS)  
Policy Statement**

**Policy Chapter:** Substitute Care  
**Policy Number:** 6.02.03  
**Policy Name:** Foster Parent Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

**Original Effective Date:** 01/01/2005  
**Revision Date(s):** 06/01/2014, 11/03/2009  
**Current Revision Date:** 11/01/2017  
**Approved By:** Cynthia G. Weiskittel

**PURPOSE:** To ensure all DCFS (agency) licensed foster caregivers and applicants received “relevant” training and educational opportunities to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to support their care of the children placed in their home.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all CCDCFS prospective/licensed foster parents and DCFS staff.

**POLICY**

- A. All DCFS prospective foster parent applicants will complete a minimum of (36) hours of pre-service training prior to the agency recommending the home for certification.
- B. To satisfy the required ongoing/continuing training hours requirements, all agency licensed foster parents must complete a minimum of forty (40) hours of training per certification period.

**PROCEDURES**

- A. For Pre-Certified Applicants:
  - 1. Each pre-certified foster parent applicant will complete a minimum of (36) hours of approved pre-service training.
  - 2. Pre-service training hours cannot be counted towards the completion of ongoing training requirements.
  - 3. Each foster parent applicant must complete pre-service training hours which addresses the following topics:

- a) the legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers;
  - b) the recommending agency's policies and procedures regarding foster caregivers;
  - c) ODJFS requirements for certifying foster homes;
  - d) the effects of placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, their families, and foster caregivers;
  - e) foster caregiver's involvement in permanency planning for children and their families;
  - f) the effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on normal human growth and development;
  - g) behavior management techniques;
  - h) effects of caregiving on children's families;
  - i) at least two hours of training on cultural issues in placement training including cultural diversity training;
  - j) prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases;
  - k) community health and social services available to children and their families;
  - l) with criminal or delinquent backgrounds who are placed as outlined in the OAC 5101:2-42-90 and the ORC 2152.72;
  - m) If the foster parent applicant is being licensed to care for emancipated teens, the applicant shall be provided additional training hours which addresses at least all of the following topics:
    - Preparing youth for independent living;
    - Adolescent development, needs and issues;
  - n) The reasonable and prudent parent standard as described in division (C) of section 5103.162 of the Revised Code.
4. If the applicant is a licensed foster parent transferring from another recommending agency, CCDCFS may require additional training to qualify for transfer. The Senior Manager of Foster Care or designee will review the training record of the foster caregiver and determine what additional coursework will be required.
- B. CCDCFS will reimburse foster parents for completing training as outlined in accordance with OAC (5101:2-5-38).
- 1. Each applicant who successfully completes the required (42) hours of pre-service training (36 + 6 hours of On Boarding training) will be eligible to receive a training reimbursement stipend in the amount of \$10.00 per hour, per up to 36 hours, upon certification.
  - 2. The maximum amount of reimbursement will be (36) hours, the minimum number of pre-service training hours required by ODJFS rules.

3. CCDCFS reserves the right to decline to make a stipend payment for pre-service training if:
  - a) the applicant did not complete the training at CCDCFS;
  - b) the applicant did not successfully acquire the knowledge or skills the training was designed to impart;
  - c) the applicant did not attend a scheduled CCDCFS pre-service training class.

C. For Licensed Foster Homes:

1. Each licensed foster caregiver is required to complete a minimum of forty (40) hours of approved continuing training during each certification period. CCDCFS encourages foster caregivers to complete at minimum twenty (20) hours in the first year of every two year certification period.
2. The "Certification Year" shall begin on the date of the caregiver's initial certification or the date of the most recent recertification. No pre-service training hours will be counted towards the completion of ongoing continuing training requirements.
3. Each foster caregiver is required to complete ongoing/continuing training hours which are identified in accordance with the caregiver's written individual needs assessment and continuing training plan and may include but is not limited to the following topic areas:
  - a) foster caregivers and birth parents as part of the child protection team;
  - b) the dynamics of child abuse and neglect and recognizing and preventing child abuse and neglect;
  - c) the effects of child abuse and neglect on normal development;
  - d) how foster caregivers should work with children and their families regarding placement, separation and attachment issues;
  - e) behavior management techniques;
  - f) foster caregivers' working with children's families;
  - g) effects of caregiving on children's families;
  - h) caring for children who have been sexually abused;
  - i) cultural competency;
  - j) substance abuse and dependency;
  - k) symptoms of mental illness and learning disorders/
  - l) cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid;
  - m) developmentally appropriate activities for children.
4. If CCDCFS determines that it is necessary for a child placed in a family foster home to be provided care by a foster caregiver that has completed certification in CPR and/or First Aid and the caregiver has not previously completed such training, the training will be provided during the foster caregiver's first year after initial certification or as soon as possible after the child is placed.

5. Foster parents licensed to care for emancipating teens are required to complete additional training hours which address the following topics:
  - Strategies to teach independent living skills;
  - Emancipating youth's needs and issues.
6. All foster caregivers will receive a quarterly calendar outlining training opportunities provided by DCFS and instructions for registering.
7. DCFS will reimburse foster parents for completing training as outlined in accordance with OAC (5101:2-5-38).
  - a) Foster parents successfully completing at least (40) hours of ongoing/continuing training per two year certification period are eligible to receive a training reimbursement stipend in the amount of \$10.00 per hour per applicant.
  - b) The maximum allowable amount of reimbursement is for (40) hours, the minimum number of annual training hours required by ODJFS rules per two year certification period.
  - c) DCFS reserves the right to decline to make a stipend payment for ongoing/continuing training if:
    - i. the foster caregiver was late, left early, was outside of the training room or slept during the training event;
    - ii. the foster caregiver failed to provide adequate documentation of a non-DCFS training event for which they are seeking training credit.
8. Children are not permitted to attend training scheduled through the North Central Ohio Regional Training Center (NCORTC) and DCFS Professional Development and Learning (PD&L) Department.
9. Training opportunities are abundant and foster caregivers may use any, all or a combination of the following to meet training requirements:
  - a) Training offered by NCORTC and DCFS PD&L Department;
  - b) Relevant training offered by another agency;
  - c) Relevant training or classes offered by a church, school, community agency;
  - d) Relevant college level classes related to child welfare or social work;
  - e) Foster Parent Cluster meeting;
  - f) Attendance at training sponsored by a local, state, or national foster care or adoption conference;
  - g) Approved web-based training;
  - h) Any other educational experience approved by a Senior Manager of Foster Care.

10. Videotapes produced for entertainment purposes may not be used to meet ongoing training requirements.
11. BEFORE ATTENDING any training offered outside of DCFS, the foster caregiver must obtain prior approval by a Unit Supervisor of Foster Care in order to ensure the training satisfies ODJFS requirements, determine how many training hours credit the caregiver may receive, and stipend eligibility. Upon approval and completion of the training, the foster caregiver must provide a "Certificate of Attendance" as proof of completion.
12. The Resource Manager will meet with the foster caregiver prior to the re-certification date, and along with the foster caregiver, develop a written needs assessment and continuing education plan which:
  - a) is effective for the two year period the foster caregiver's certificate is in effect;
  - b) is appropriate for the type of foster home the caregiver is certified to provide;
  - c) identifies the courses which the caregiver must successfully complete within the two year period;
  - d) outlines the criteria the agency will utilize to determine successful completion of the identified courses;
  - e) assures the foster caregiver that the courses will be reasonable, available, and accessible;
  - f) specifies whether the agency will waive ongoing training hours (see below).
13. DCFS may waive up to eight (8) hours of ongoing /continuing training per two year certification period if ALL of the following apply:
  - a) The foster caregiver has provided foster care for at least two years and;
  - b) The foster caregiver has provided foster care for at least 90 days of the 12 months preceding the date the agency issues the waiver and;
  - c) The foster caregiver has not violated any requirements governing certification of foster homes during the 12 months preceding the date the agency issues the waiver and;
  - d) The foster caregiver has complied in full with the needs assessment and continuing training plan developed for the foster caregiver as outlined in 5101:2-5-33 and described in B(11) in this policy.
14. "Good Cause" for non-completion of required ongoing/continuing training may be:
  - a) A documented illness, condition, hospitalization or accident which rendered the caregiver incapable of attending the required training provided there has been reasonable effort demonstrated to attend the training prior to the documented emergency or circumstance.

- b) If the foster caregiver was out of state or out of the country for a significant period of time which is documented;
  - c) If the care of a foster/birth/adopted/kin child or other family member made it impossible to leave the home to attend training which is documented;
  - d) A documented emergency or circumstance which made the foster caregiver unavailable to attend training provided there has been reasonable effort made to attend the training prior to the documented emergency or circumstance.
  - e) The foster caregiver has served in active duty outside the State of Ohio with a branch of the armed forces of the United States for more than thirty days in the preceding two year period.
  - f) The foster caregiver has served in active duty as a member of the Ohio organized militia, as defined in section 5923.01 of the Revised Code, which includes the Ohio national guard, the Ohio naval militia and the Ohio military reserve, for more than thirty days in the preceding two-year period and that active duty relates to either an emergency in or outside of Ohio or to military duty in or outside of Ohio.
15. For foster caregivers who fail to complete at least twenty (20) hours of ongoing training for certification year and are able to demonstrate “good cause”, the Resource Manager will meet with the foster caregiver prior to the annual/recertification date and develop a written corrective action plan in which the foster caregiver must complete any remaining training hours within (90) days of the annual/recertification date. The corrective action plan will be approved by the RM Supervisor and mailed to the foster caregiver within three (3) working days of the initial meeting.
16. The additional time for a caregiver who has served in active duty shall be one month for each month the caregiver was on active duty. Any required training that is not met at the end of a foster caregiver's certification period applying the preceding sentence shall be waived by the agency. When a waiver of training is approved by an agency under this paragraph, the required training for the next certification period shall be the same as for any other caregiver operating a foster home of the type for which the foster caregiver is certified. The agency shall document any such extension of time in the foster caregiver's record.
17. If the foster parent does not meet the requirements of a corrective action plan, the agency will follow the procedures for recommendation for revocation.

18. If the foster caregiver fails to complete the required training hours within the (90) day corrective action plan timeframe, the Resource Manager will begin the process of revoking the Foster Home Certificate as outlined in OAC 5101:2-5-26.
19. Foster caregivers who fail to complete forty (40) hours of ongoing training per certification period will have their Foster Home Certificate revoked as outlined in 5101:2-5-26. DCFS foster caregivers are encouraged to complete at least 20 hours of this requirement in the first year of every two year certification period and adhere to the training plan.
20. Foster caregivers must complete all training requirements for recertification at least thirty (30) days prior to the license expiration date.
21. Training records of each foster caregiver are maintained.
22. Waivers issued for continuing training hours must be documented in the foster caregiver's record and include the following documentation:
  - a) date of the waiver;
  - b) number of hours of the training waived;
  - c) a statement that each of the above requirements in B(12) have been met.

**SEE ALSO:**

Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-5  
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-7  
Ohio Administrative Code Section 5101:2-33