

Policy Title:	Recruitment, Training, Support, and Retention of Certified Families – Child Welfare				
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Approved By: *(Authorized Signer Name)*

Date Approved

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I. Purpose. This policy provides guidelines for:

- (a) The local Child Welfare office responsibilities for recruitment of persons seeking to become relative caregivers, foster parents, and pre-adoptive parents;
- (b) The local Child Welfare office responsibilities for orientation and training opportunities for applicants, certified families, pre-adoptive, and adoptive families;
- (c) The local Child Welfare office requirements for Foundations training curriculum content;
- (d) The subject area requirements for local Child Welfare office annual training plans for certified families;
- (e) The local Child Welfare office support activities for certified families; and
- (f) The local Child Welfare office retention activities for certified families.

II. Policy.

- (1) Local Child Welfare branch offices recruit persons seeking to become relative caregivers, foster parents, and pre-adoptive families through the following activities:
 - (a) Treating certified relative caregivers and foster families respectfully and as members of a child welfare team;
 - (b) Engaging in a diligent search for a child or young adult's relatives;
 - (c) Identifying and seeking out relative caregivers, foster parents, and adoptive parents that represent all ethnic and cultural groups within the community;
 - (d) Identifying and targeting outreach efforts to communities with the greatest need

for foster parents in close proximity to the child or young adult's biological family;

- (e) Developing a local community-based recruitment plan;
- (f) Responding to inquiry calls and providing persons with oral and written information to help them explore the relative caregiver, foster care, and adoption opportunities available through Child Welfare;
- (g) Providing a timely introduction to foster parenting and adoption for applicants, that may include meetings to introduce them to foster parenting and adoption which reflects community and branch needs; and
- (h) Providing community outreach and presentations about the Child Welfare's relative caregiver, foster care, and adoption programs.

(2) The local Child Welfare office is responsible for the following training activities:

- (a) Providing an orientation to applicants in a timely manner and to certified families within 30 days of placing a child in the home;
- (b) Presenting Child Welfare's Foundations training to all applicants in a timely manner;
- (c) Enrolling a certified family in Child Welfare's Foundations training within 90 days of placing a child in the certified family's home; and
- (d) Assuring that Child Welfare's Foundations training addresses each of the following content areas:

(A) Overview.

- (i) Preparation necessary to successfully foster and adopt traumatized children.
- (ii) Purpose and content of Child Welfare's Foundations training.
- (iii) Role of the foster or adoptive parent.
- (iv) Requirements for certification as a foster or adoptive parent.
- (v) Partnering with Child Welfare.
- (vi) Mandatory Reporting of child abuse and neglect.

(B) Importance of the birth parent.

- (i) Reasons children are separated from their families.

- (ii) Importance of the child's family and the foster parent's role as a member of the case planning team.
 - (iii) Attachment and its importance to healthy growth.
 - (iv) Impact of separation on the child and family.
 - (v) Foster parent's role in the re-unification process.
- (C) Child development and the impact of abuse and neglect.
- (i) Normal childhood development and the impact of abuse and neglect on child development.
 - (ii) Impact of drugs and alcohol on children.
 - (iii) Identification and development of strategies to work with children who have been impacted by abuse and neglect.
- (D) Sexual abuse.
- (i) Basic dynamics of sexual abuse.
 - (ii) The impact of sexual abuse on children.
 - (iii) Basic parenting skills to utilize with sexually abused children.
- (E) Discipline.
- (i) Discipline vs. punishment.
 - (ii) Causes of a child's misbehavior.
 - (iii) Discipline techniques.
 - (iv) Guidelines regarding discipline of foster children.
- (F) Valuing a child's heritage.
- (i) Awareness and recognition of the cultural and racial composition and impact of culture and race on the foster or adoptive parent's life.
 - (ii) Awareness of discrimination and recognition when foster children encounter or feel discrimination.
 - (iii) The differences between race, ethnicity, and culture.
 - (iv) Honoring differences and techniques of caring for children of

another race, culture, or ethnicity.

(G) Working with a child's biological family.

- (i) Benefits and challenges when working with the child's family.
- (ii) Roles and responsibilities of a certified family.
- (iii) Strategies and techniques for working with the child's family.
- (iv) Minimizing the challenges of working with the child's family.
- (v) How working with the child's family minimizes challenges.
- (vi) Unique issues of foster parenting.

(H) Next steps.

(i) *Adoptive Parent Foundations.*

- (I) The adoption placement process.
- (II) Open adoptions.
- (III) Understanding a child's grief and loss.
- (IV) Mediation between the adoptive and biological family.
- (V) Characteristics of successful adoptive families.
- (V) The effect of adoption on the adoptive family.

(ii) *Foster Parent Foundations.*

- (I) Awareness of the effect of foster parenting on the fostering family.
- (II) Techniques for getting support.
- (III) Understanding the process of an investigation of an allegation of child abuse or neglect, and care-giving and supervision techniques to minimize the risk of allegations.
- (IV) Characteristics of successful foster families.
- (V) Effect of moves and techniques for transitioning children.

- (e) Coordinate with the Child Welfare Partnership in developing a local Child Welfare office annual training plan sufficient to address the needs of the certified and

adoptive families served by the local Child Welfare office. Ensure the local Child Welfare office training plans include, but are not limited to, the following topics over any two year period.

- (A) Role and Responsibilities: Achieving success in your role as a foster parent.
- (B) Behavior Management: Strategies for positively influencing challenging behaviors.
- (C) Attachment and Development: Understanding the impact of abuse and neglect on child development.
- (D) Systems Processes and Procedures: A fuller understanding of the Child Welfare system and community partners such as CASA and the CRB.
- (E) Sex Abuse: Caring for sexually abused children.
- (F) Foster Family Dynamics: Preparing for and understanding your changing family.
- (G) Surviving and Thriving: Developing support for yourself and your family as a foster parent.
- (H) Relationships with the Child's Family: Connecting and working with a child's family.
- (I) CPR, First Aid, child safety, and beyond.
- (J) Parenting Children with Specialized Needs: Specialized diagnoses.
- (K) The effects of drugs and alcohol on children and families.
- (L) Dealing with grief and loss.
- (M) Successful transition of children.

(3) The local Child Welfare office is responsible for the following support activities:

- (a) Implementing and monitoring Placement Support Plans for any certified family who needs assistance in maintaining conditions that provide safety and well being to children or young adults in the home.
- (b) Facilitating the establishment and involvement of certified families in mentorship and support groups that teach and encourage responsible substitute caregiving.

(4) The local Child Welfare office is responsible for the following retention activities:

- (a) Fully implementing the Foster Parent Bill of Rights;

- (b) Supporting communication between certified families and case workers to ensure services and resources are available to children and young adults;
- (c) Developing, implementing and participating in local community efforts to provide supportive communication networks for certified families through informational newsletters and recognition activities;
- (d) Developing a method to obtain feedback by establishing and maintaining a local Advisory Committee or by establishing a method to obtain regular input from certified families; and
- (e) Encouraging, promoting, and seeking appropriate involvement of the certified families in case planning.

Definition(s):

"Applicant" means an individual or individuals who apply for an initial Certificate of Approval to become a certified family.

"Certified Family" means an individual or individuals who hold a Certificate of Approval from Child Welfare to provide care, in the home in which they reside, to a child or young adult in the care or custody of the Department.

"Child" means a person under 18 years of age.

"Foster parent" means a person who operates a home that has been approved by the Department to provide care for an unrelated child or young adult who is placed in the home by the Department.

"Foundations training" means the initial series of classes conducted for applicants and certified families which provides fundamental information on the following, specified content areas: Overview of foster parenting, Importance of the birth parent, Child development and the impact of abuse, sexual abuse, discipline, valuing a child's heritage, working with a child's family, and next steps.

"Placement Support Plan" means a written set of actions or resources that is developed to assist a relative caregiver or foster parent to maintain conditions that provide safety and well-being for children or young adults in the home.

"Pre-adoptive parent" means an individual with a current Certificate of Approval to operate a home to provide care for a child placed by the Department for purposes of adoption.

"Relative caregiver" means a person who operates a home that has been approved by the Department to provide care for a related child or young adult who is placed in the home by the Department.

"Substitute care" means the out-of-home placement of a child or young adult who is in the legal or physical custody and care of the Department.

"Training" means instruction or guidance to build competencies from written or electronic resources, conferences, classes, mental health or other professional consultation, and support groups that increase a person's knowledge, skill, or ability to care for and protect a child or young adult in the person's care. Training does not include attending court or other administrative review hearings, meetings whose purpose is case planning or case review, parent-teacher conferences, or activities routinely performed by a certified family.

"Young adult" means a person aged 18 through 20 years who remains in the care and custody of the Department, and lives in substitute care or lives independently through the Department's Independent Living Subsidy Program.

Reference(s):

Child Welfare Policy II-B.1, "Certification Standards for Foster Parents, Relative Caregivers and Pre-Adoptive Parents", OAR 413-200-0301 to 413-200-0396.

http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_2/ii-b1.pdf

Child Welfare Policy II-B.1.1, "Child Welfare Responsibilities for Certification and Supervision of Relative Caregivers, Foster Parents and Pre-Adoptive Parents", OAR 413-200-0270 to 413-200-0296.

http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_2/ii-b11.pdf

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