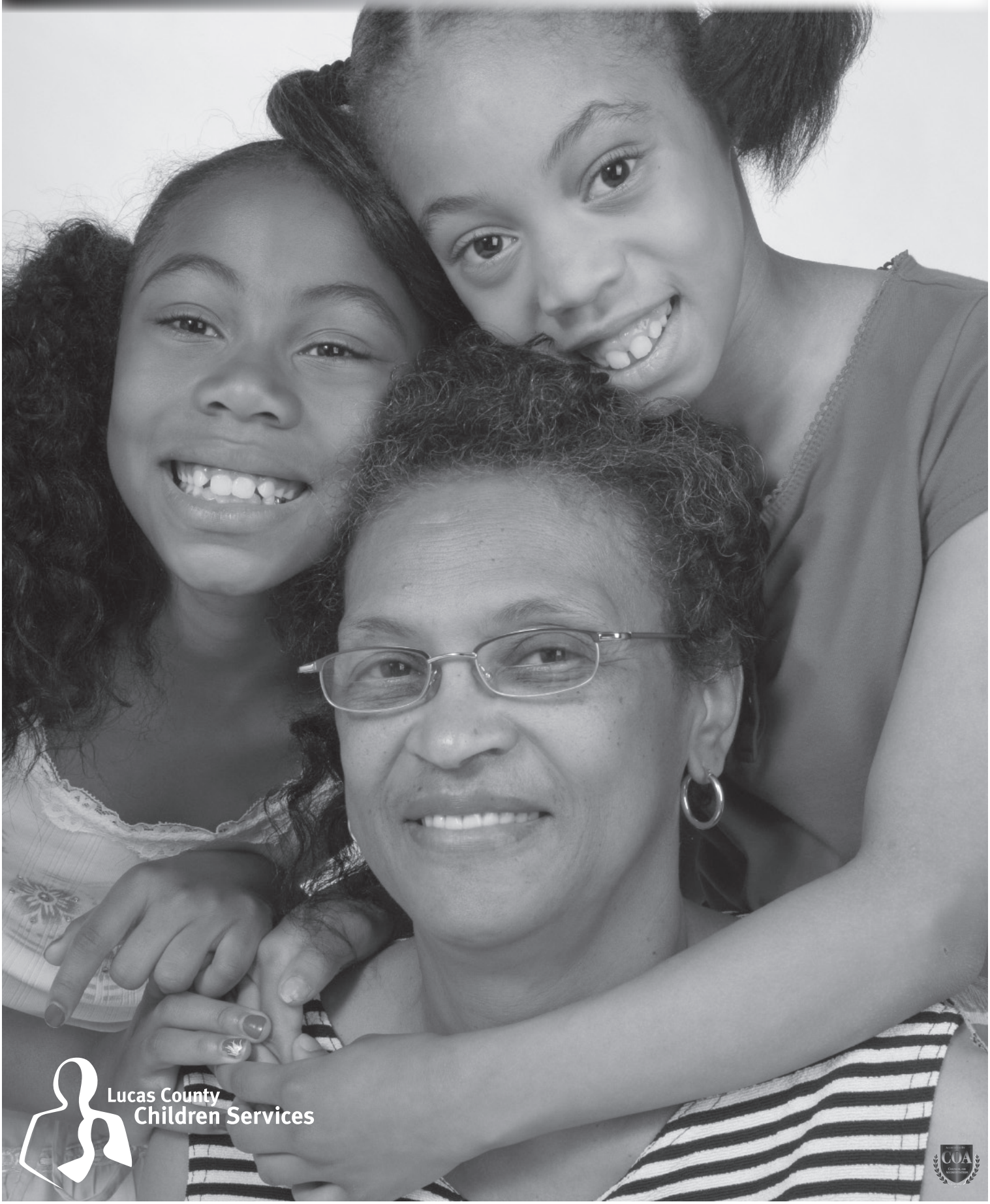
Kinship Care: Relatives Caring for Children



Lucas County
Children Services

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Our Mission:

To lead the community in the protection of children at risk of abuse and neglect. This is accomplished by working with families, service providers and community members to assess risk and coordinate community-based services resulting in safe, stable and permanent families for children.

What is Kinship Care?

When a child cannot live with his or her parents, relatives often take over the full-time responsibility of caring for that child. This is called kinship care (also known as "relative care"). Relative care can be temporary, meaning the child eventually goes home (or to another home). Relative care can also be permanent, meaning the relatives care for the child until he or she becomes an adult.

Relative care takes many forms. When the child goes to live with a relative, the court may also give that relative temporary custody of the child. Or, the court may ask Children Services to hold custody while the child lives with the relative.

Sometimes the caregiver is not even a blood relative. Any adult who has close ties to the family can be considered for kinship care. Regardless of the type of kinship care arrangement, the kinship caregivers' voluntary commitment to devote their lives to the children under their care is a courageous, life-changing decision

Caring for Children who were Abused, Neglected or Abandoned

Even if the children in your care are happy to be with you, they have been through a lot. Losing a parent is hard on a child, as are the many changes that might occur in the child's life. One or both parents may abuse drugs or alcohol, be violent or have mental health concerns. Because of these problems, the children in your care may have been hurt physically and/or emotionally. They may have been underfed, or without the care they needed to stay safe and to grow. They may have been allowed to see sexual activity or may even have been sexually abused. All of these problems may have affected the children in your care, who may need special help to grow and thrive.

In addition to signs of physical abuse or neglect, children who have suffered a loss seem to share several emotions and behaviors. However, each child will react or respond to the loss, dependent upon:

- The significance of the loss
- Whether the loss is temporary or permanent
- Coping abilities of the child
- Availability of supports
- Age and mental abilities of the child (at the time of the loss and the present time)

Consequently, while some children may react in very extreme ways, others may respond mildly or not at all. In addition, one child may be affected in one area, while another child may be affected in another area. Below is a list of common emotions and behaviors that may affect the children in your care.

Grief

When children have been separated from people who are important to them, their emotional response is one of grief and mourning. There are five identifiable stages of grief: shock/denial, anger/rage, bargaining, depression and resolution/acceptance.

Control

Many children who have experienced loss feel that they have no control or decision-making power over their own lives. Consequently, they may try to regain control of their lives by being orderly or compulsive, or planning ahead. Other youths may demonstrate their need for control through constant power struggles with authority figures, truancy, defiance, substance abuse or tantrums.

Loyalty

Having at least two sets of parents creates a conflict for the child. The child may feel that closeness and love for one set of parents may be an act of disloyalty towards the other set of parents, thus hurting them.

Rejection/Fear

Regardless of the actual circumstances surrounding the child's loss, the child's perception is one that (s)he was rejected and then abandoned by the birth parents. To avoid rejection, some children may not allow themselves to get close to others, or they may react by continually seeking acceptance and approval from those around them.

Legal Issues

If it is determined through a Family Case Conference that the child(ren) must be removed from their home, the agency will file a complaint with the Juvenile Court. At that point, you could receive temporary custody, which gives you the authority and responsibility to care for the child(ren). This includes the right to consent to medical/dental treatment and to enroll the child(ren) in school. During this time, the agency will be working with the parents to try to resolve the concerns that caused the children to be removed.

If the child(ren) cannot be reunified with a parent within the first nine months, a decision will need to be made about a permanent plan for them. Generally, there are two main options:

- You can be awarded legal custody of the child(ren).
- The agency can file for permanent custody and place the child(ren) for adoption, either with you or with someone else.

Legal custody and permanent custody/adoption differ in that with legal custody, the parents still maintain some limited rights to the child(ren). This and other differences are explained in more detail in the *Understanding Custody Alternatives* brochure that your caseworker will provide for you. Your caseworker will also answer any other questions you might have.

Do I have to let the parents visit at my house?

You, the parents, the caseworker and the children's guardian *ad litem* or CASA (appointed by the court) will discuss arrangements for parenting time that is best for everyone involved – especially the child. The caseworker will arrange a Family Team Meeting to discuss and arrange the details, including where the visits will take place, when, with whom, for how long, and who will provide supervision and transportation. There is a minimum requirement of one visit each week for each parent.

Do I have to come to court?

You must be present in court to be awarded custody. If custody is awarded to you, it is important that you attend hearings whenever possible so you can know first-hand how and what decisions are made, as well as to offer input into the decision-making process.

Will I need a lawyer?

You have the right to consult with and retain the services of a lawyer at your own expense, or if you have custody and meet requirements specified by the court, you may be appointed an attorney by the court. In most situations, however, it will not be necessary for you to have an attorney.

What is a Home Study?

The home study is a state mandated evaluation of your home to document whether or not it is appropriate for placement of the children and whether you can meet the child(ren)'s needs. A preliminary home study will be completed prior to the child(ren) coming to live with you. The full home study will be completed within 30 days. All home studies will be updated on an annual basis or following any change in household status, including a move or another person joining the household. The caregiver and/or relative must be 21 years of age or older to be considered for placement.

The full home study includes:

References

You will be asked to provide the names of three individuals who are able to attest to the kind of person you are, and your ability to parent additional children. Only one of these references can be from a person related to you. The references must be received before the home study can be considered complete.

Site and Safety

The caseworker will need to observe the home environment to ensure that the home is safe for the children to reside there. This includes having smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, a fire evacuation plan, as well as emergency telephone numbers being posted within the home. The caseworker may be able to assist you with some of these items. The home must pass a sight and safety review. Foster homes must have smoke detectors in each bedroom and on each floor. Windows must open. No foster child can sleep in a basement or in the attic, or in a room that does not have a window.

Lucas County Children Services (LCCS) follows all current and applicable laws regarding the safety of children.

Financial Information

Caregivers must be able to provide documentation of a source of income adequate to meet the needs of the household. You may also be asked to provide documentation of your monthly household expenses, as well as copies of utility bills to demonstrate that accounts are up to date.

Interviews

The caseworker will need to interview all household members, including children. Anyone living in the home over the age of 18 will be part of the discussion of the abuse or neglect concerns that the child(ren) have faced, as well as each member's ability to protect the children and support them through their emotional changes. Long-term commitment will be addressed, as well as legal custody versus permanent custody of the child(ren).

Police Checks

The caseworker will initiate a criminal background check on the prospective relative or nonrelative caregiver and anyone over the age of 18 residing within the home. These checks will be conducted by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI) and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and will include fingerprints. The required criminal record checks must be completed prior to an agency approving the prospective relative or nonrelative placement, and must be updated annually. Children over the age of 12 will also have a juvenile criminal record check.

Benefits

Day Care Support

LCCS assists eligible caregivers with temporary support for child care for employment purposes only. To be eligible, the caregiver must be providing care for a child/children in temporary custody of the caregiver or LCCS. Child care is only offered during the hours of the caregiver's verifiable work schedule, and if there is no other caregiver in the home available during those hours.

To apply:

1. The caregiver must complete the ODJFS child care application and all necessary documentation as identified on the application cover sheet.
2. The completed application and all required paper work must be returned to the LCCS Day Care Supervisor within 14 days of the child(ren)'s day care start date.
3. Failure to return the completed application within 14 days will result in the cancellation of LCCS' day care payments until the application is processed by your county Job and Family Services (JFS), which may take up to 90 days, and payment will become the care giver's responsibility.

LCCS day care can be terminated if:

- The caregiver is no longer employed;
- The child(ren) are no longer placed with the caregiver;
- The caregiver receives legal custody or signs an agreement to adopt the child(ren);
- LCCS closes the case;
- The caregiver fails to comply with JFS terms and conditions; or
- A non-working adult lives in the home.

Am I Eligible to Receive Financial Assistance, Medicaid and Cash Assistance for the Children I am Caring For?

Raising children is expensive. No matter how much you love the children in your care, you have to be practical. Before the children came to live with you, you probably had a household budget which met your needs. Now it may be strained to the breaking point.

Ohio Works First (OWF) Cash Assistance and Medicaid

Caregivers and the children in their care may be eligible to receive OWF monthly cash assistance. As a relative caregiver you must prove relationship by blood or marriage to the child(ren) in your care. If you are a non-relative kinship caregiver, you must have court-ordered temporary or legal custody of the child in order to qualify for OWF cash assistance.

Child-Only (OWF) Benefits

There are two ways that relatives can receive OWF benefits. The first way is for you to receive cash assistance ONLY for the children in your care. In these cases, the county department of Job and Family Services (JFS) does not take into account any of your income or assets and does not provide money for you as part of the OWF grant for the children. These are called child-only cases. You will generally be able to receive this money until the child turns 18 or leaves your home. If you have a child-only grant, there are no time limits for cash assistance. However, in order to receive OWF child-only assistance, you must be willing to cooperate with child support requirements to ensure that the child's parents are held financially responsible.

Examples of documents a maternal grandparent would need to prove relationship:

- Birth mother's birth certificate
- Child's birth certificate

Examples of documents a paternal grandparent would need to prove relationship:

- Birth certificate of the father (to prove you are his parent)
- Birth certificate of child must show the father's name, or paternity must be established through the Child Support Enforcement Agency
- Child's birth certificate

Examples of documents an aunt/uncle would need to prove relationship:

- Birth mother's birth certificate
- Aunt/uncle's birth certificate, showing the same parent
- Child's birth certificate

Examples of documents a brother/sister would need to prove relationship:

- Child's birth certificate
- Brother/sister's birth certificate showing at least one same parent

If you are unable to obtain any of the above-listed documents, the county JFS will assist you, when possible.

Household OWF Grants

The second way for you, as a relative caregiver, to receive OWF for the child(ren) in your care is for you to also be part of the grant. A relative caregiver can be included in the grant if you have no children of your own living with you. This means that the county JFS will look at your income and assets, and if you are eligible for OWF, include you as part of the grant (your spouse's income will also be reviewed). You will receive more money because the grant will be for both you and the child(ren) in your care. However, the new welfare reform requirements will apply to you. This means that you will probably be required to work and will be limited to three years of OWF assistance.

Most relative caregivers receive child-only grants and do not have to meet the work requirements and time limits.

If you want to be included in the cash grant, you will need to provide the following information for each individual (including the child placed in your home):

- Proof of relationship
- Proof of citizenship
- Identity
- Copy of social security card
- Information about income and assets

Food Assistance Benefits/Direction Card

Food assistance is now available as a plastic card called the Direction Card, which can be used instead of cash to buy food at the grocery store. No sales tax can be charged on these purchases. The Direction Card cannot be used to buy non-food items like soap, diapers, alcohol or tobacco.

Your JFS caseworker determines whether your household qualifies for food assistance by looking at the gross income and counted liquid assets of everyone in the household. If you have a child-only cash grant for the children in your care, then your income and assets were not considered by JFS when it determined your eligibility for OWF. However, your income and assets may be too high for your family to qualify for food assistance, even though you can receive OWF. The important thing to know is that you should apply for both programs.

What should I bring when I apply for the Direction Card?

The best strategy is to bring as much information as possible when you apply with JFS. The more you can tell your caseworker, the more quickly your application can be processed. Bring as many of the following items as possible, but remember that you can apply even if you do not have all of these papers (if necessary, your intake worker can help you get these documents after you have applied):

- A rent receipt, house payment book, or lease with the landlord's name or telephone number. This information verifies your current address and rent expenses.
- Utility and telephone bills to show how much money you generally spend on heat, electricity, water, and the telephone.
- Social security cards for all persons in your household.
- Proof of any income deductions you can potentially claim, such as childcare expenses, child support, tuition or care for an invalid.
- Information on any assets you own, such as a savings or checking account, vehicles, life insurance policies, 401(k) plans, etc.
- Income verification for everyone in the household
- Birth verification for everyone in the household.
- Identification for everyone in the household.

Child Support

Child support is available to any relative or non-relative who is caring full-time for a child. In order to be eligible for child support, the caregiver must have physical custody of the child. This means that the child must live with, and be cared for full-time, by the caregiver. The amount of child support the child's parents will be ordered to pay to the caregiver depends on both of the parents' ability to pay, and the needs of the child. If the caregiver is already receiving OWF for the child, child support will be paid directly to the county JFS. A Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) is located in every county and provides services to obtain and maintain child support. A CSEA can help order child support wage withholding from a parent's paycheck, intercept tax refunds, help to locate an absent parent, and establish paternity.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

SSI provides cash assistance to those over age 65 or for disabled or blind individuals of any age with limited income and resources. For additional information, or to apply for SSI, please contact the Social Security Administration office in your county.

Child Care Assistance

Child care assistance may be provided if your family is enrolled in the Ohio Works First program, if you are low-income and need help with child care costs while you are at work, or if you are enrolled in a job training program. Your entire household income will be considered in determining your eligibility for child care assistance. You would apply for this program at your county JFS. LCCS may also provide short-term day care assistance for your kinship children.

Kinship Permanency Incentive (KPI)

KPI provides state-funded financial support for minor children in the legal and physical custody of grandparents, relatives or other kinship caregivers, including non-relatives. You can be eligible for the KPI if you were awarded legal custody of the child(ren) on or after July 1, 2005, and if your household income is no more than 300% of the federal poverty guideline. The child's

placement must also have been approved by an Ohio public children's services agency, such as LCCS. KPI payments are in addition to OWF assistance, provided you meet the rest of the requirements. You may receive both KPI and OWF at the same time. You would apply for KPI at LCCS. If your application is approved, you would receive a cash payment for each eligible child. Re-application must be made every six months for up to three years. A cash payment would be received at the time of re-appplication/re-approval for each child.

School Information

Each child in the State of Ohio is guaranteed the right to an education. Children who are removed from their home and placed into the home of a relative may experience a great deal of stress and anxiety. It is important that the educational needs of the child be met as quickly as possible.

What do you need to enroll a child in school?

Contact the school district and make a list of information you will need to enroll the child. The requirements can vary from district to district. The most common requirements include:

- Documentation (called a Journal Entry) that either you or LCCS have custody of the child.
- Letter from LCCS stating that you may enroll the child.
- Names and addresses of child's previous school(s).
- Child's birth certificate.
- Proof of your residence in the school district.
- Your photo identification.
- LCCS consent to treat medical form (for children in agency custody only).

Emergency Contact Information

List yourself as the child's primary emergency contact. For children in agency custody, list your agency caseworker as the secondary contact.

What to Tell the School

- Provide necessary medical information, including any medication the child needs to take during the school day, the reason the medication is needed, and the dosages.
- The child's school may have special forms or requirements to administer medication; these vary from district to district.
- Let the school know if the child is learning disabled or in a special education classroom.
- Children in special education will have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) that must be followed from the time of enrollment.
- You have a right to act as the child's surrogate on an IEP and should ensure that the district lists you as such and invites you to attend all meetings.
- If you have any questions regarding special education, you should call the school or the local Board of Education and ask to speak to the Special Education Department or a representative.
- LCCS Educational Specialists, or your LCCS Community Advocate (if assigned) may be able to answer your questions about the IEP process. They can be contacted through your child's caseworker.

Information for Pre-School Children

What is Head Start?

Head Start is a federally funded, all day or half-day program that provides education, enrichment and many other services to pre-schoolers and the adults raising them.

Who is eligible for Head Start?

A pre-school age child that comes to live with you may be eligible. Head Start provides services to children ages 3 to 5 who live at or below the poverty level, as well as children with disabilities and their families. Financial eligibility for this program is governed by state and federal laws. For more information about Head Start, or to apply, call 419-255-7125.

If you live outside of Lucas County and LCCS does NOT have custody of the child, contact the Head Start office in your county of residence.

The table on the next page shows some of the processes to be followed for medical/dental procedures for those children in LCCS custody.

Caregivers' Medical/Dental Responsibilities

All children in LCCS custody are required to have a physical and dental exam within the first 30 days of the initial custody and placement.

Process to be Followed for Medical/Dental Procedures for Children in LCCS Custody

Procedure	Routine Dental and Physical	Emergency Services	Elective Surgery (to be scheduled)	Braces/Dental Procedures	Routine Tests (lab work, x-rays)	Other
Take Consent to Treat/Health Visit form	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Needs surgery second opinion	NO	NO	YES	YES (second opinion must be with a doctor)	NO	YES (for anything requiring anesthesia)
Must notify before procedure is done or scheduled	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES (for anything requiring anesthesia
Must notify caseworker or LCCS agent (nurse or security)	YES (return health visit form to the health clinic)	YES (as soon as possible at hospital; necessary forms will be faxed to hospital)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Need informed surgical consent signed by Executive Director	NO	NO	YES	YES	NO (hospitals may call LCCS clinic for verbal permission even with consent form)	YES (for anything requiring anesthesia)
LCCS clinic nurse will get all forms signed and faxed to hospitals and doctors	YES	NO	YES	NO (must be informed)	NO	N/A
Take Health Information Form	N/A	LCCS clinic nurse will fax if needed	YES (LCCS clinic nurse will send)	NO	Should have readily available at all times	N/A

Questions? Call 419-213-3200 and ask for the Health Services Department.

How to Become a Licensed Foster Parent

All prospective foster caregivers must attend the pre-service orientation training and must complete the full 36 hours of training. This is a requirement before you can have a home study completed. An agency representative will help you with dates and registration for this training.

- Prospective foster parents must be at least 21 years of age.
- At least one of the foster parents must be able to read and write English.
- Foster caregivers must have an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household.
- A medical report on every member of the household is required. The caregiver's report must state that he/she is suitable to be a foster parent.
- A police check, FBI background check and a BCI fingerprint check must be completed for ALL household members 18 years of age and older. This includes boyfriends, girlfriends, significant others and adult children living in the home. Juvenile criminal checks will be secured for anyone under the age of 18 living in the home.
- The prospective foster caregiver (and all adult household members) must have a history free of convictions or guilty pleas to the offenses listed in the licensing rules. If a felony conviction is over ten years old (three years for a misdemeanor), the agency may be able to determine that an applicant is eligible. This eligibility depends on the type of crime, characteristics of the crime victim and other licensing rule requirements.

Some of these offenses are:

Homicide	Drug Offenses	Burglary
Menacing	Domestic Violence	Robbery
Sexual Crimes	Weapons Control	Assault

Crimes Against Children
Kidnapping and Related Offenses
Contributing to the Unruliness or Delinquency of a Child

- Past substance abuse can also be a problem. An alcohol and drug assessment may be requested. Current substance abuse disqualifies you from becoming a foster parent.
- Adults living in the household who have participated in counseling or other mental health therapy will be required to sign a release of information about their history and any services received.

Foster care rules state that:

- Every foster child must have his or her own bed.
- Foster children cannot share a bed.
- No more than four children per room. (The allowable number may be less than four if the room is small.)
- No more than four children under the age of 5 in the home.*
- No more than two children under the age of 2 in the home. *
- No more than a total of ten children in a home.*
- No more than five foster children in a home.*
- A foster child over the age of 5 can only share a room with children of the same gender.
- A child over the age of 1 year cannot share a room with an adult.

- You must complete a minimum of 36 hours of mandatory foster care training; there are no exceptions.
- You must supply three favorable, non-related references.
- You must supply proof of residency for the past five years, as well as documentation of your marital status (if applicable) and a photo ID.
- Any family pets must be child friendly and you must provide proof of current vaccinations.
- A site and safety inspection for your home is required, including a furnace and fire inspection.
- Your home must be maintained in a clean and safe manner, free of potentially hazardous or dangerous items.
- Payments to foster parents will vary depending on the level of training the foster parent has received and the specific needs of the children. This will be determined by a foster care caseworker at the time of foster care certification. The difference in value between foster and county JFS benefits could be substantial; this all depends upon your foster care certification and whether you qualify for "household" or "child only" benefits through JFS. Each case will be different; your caseworker will help you make the best decision for your household.
- Please note that you cannot be a foster parent to a child for whom you have temporary or legal custody.

* Exceptions can be made to keep brothers and sisters in the same home.

Custody Alternatives

Every child deserves a permanent, stable home. Here are three ways to achieve this.

Temporary Custody

If the Juvenile Court awards temporary custody to a relative, the custody lasts for one year, unless the court terminates it earlier. The court may also grant two, six-month extensions. At the end of 24 months of temporary custody, a more permanent plan must occur: reunification with parent(s); legal custody to a relative or non-relative; or permanent custody to the agency so the child could become eligible for adoption.

The child is the responsibility of the temporary custodian.

Children Services will remain involved as long as the relative maintains temporary custody.

Legal Custody

If you are awarded legal custody of a child, you are responsible for caring for that child until (s)he reaches adulthood. Adulthood is usually reached when children turn 18 or graduate from high school, unless they are mentally or physically handicapped. You will be expected to care for the child yourself. This responsibility cannot be given to someone else, including the biological parent(s), unless the court orders custody to someone else. You cannot return the child to his/her biological parent(s) without a court order.

During the time you have legal custody, the court may order the child's biological parent(s) to pay you child support. And, if you are related to the child, you may be eligible for Ohio Works First (OWF) assistance.

During the time you have legal custody, the biological parent(s) have the right to visit with the child. The court will decide what the visitation arrangements will be and, in some cases, the court may decide that the biological parent(s) are not allowed to visit at all. You must always follow the orders of the court. The grandparents of the child may also have the right to visit the child.

During the time you have legal custody, the child cannot be returned to the biological parent(s) without a court order. If the biological parent(s) ask the court to return the child to them, you will have the opportunity to provide input before the court makes a ruling. If you are not willing to return the child to the biological parent(s), the child will remain with you, unless:

- The biological parent(s) prove to the court that there has been a change in circumstances (i.e., juvenile delinquency, medical condition, etc.) of the child.
- The court decided this would be in the best interest of the child.

This means the biological parent(s) must prove that something has changed with the way is child is being cared for. For example, you could become ill and unable to care for the child, or the child's behavior has made it difficult for you to continue caring for him/her. The court will not necessarily return the child just because the biological parent(s) has changed.

Permanent Custody

If LCCS asks the court for permanent custody, it is because the agency plans to find an adoptive family for the child. Once the agency receives permanent custody of a child, you may then apply to adopt the child.

What is Adoption?

It may seem strange to think about adopting the child in your care, but for some children, it is the best choice. Adoption is a lifelong commitment to a child, as if the child was born to you. Once an adoption is final, birth parents no longer have any legal rights or duties toward the child.

Does that mean that the child(ren) you have adopted can never see their parents of birth again?

No. It simply means that the decision is entirely yours to make. In some families, the kinship caregivers adopt, but the birth parents stay involved. In other families, the kinship caregivers feel that contact with the birth parents is not in the best interests of the child, and they do not allow any visits.

Additional Services and Programs

Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy

The Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) program is open to all adoptive families in Ohio whose child may be experiencing adoption-related problems, or problems that were pre-existing but not apparent at the time of the adoption and may place the child at risk of disruption. Services allowed under PASSS include medical, psychological and psychiatric services.

Title IV-E Adoption Subsidy

Created by the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980, this program may provide federal financial support for adopted children who are described as having special needs and meet eligibility requirements. The family's income is not taken into account when calculating this subsidy. In addition to a Medicaid card and WIC benefits for young children, a monthly cash payment may be available to children with special needs.

State Adoption Subsidy Program

The State Adoption Subsidy Program is a financial assistance program that may provide monthly subsidy payments and/or special services such as Medicaid to adoptive families who qualify financially. This program is available to adoptive families of special needs children who are not eligible for Title IV-E subsidy. A "special needs child" in Ohio is defined by criteria established by ODJFS. The family's income is taken into account when determining eligibility

Non-Recurring Expenses Subsidy

Attorney bills, court costs, and certain other expenses may be paid through this agency in the amount of up to $1,000 per child if the expenses are well documented and submitted to the agency after the adoption is completed.

Rights of Children in Kinship Care

1. Protection from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, or inhumane treatment. Children shall not be threatened with confinement in a detention or mental health facility.
2. Physical security, including a safe place to sleep, balanced meals at regular hours and adequate clothing.
3. Education that meets their individual needs.
4. Health services, emergency and preventative.
5. Recreation appropriate to the child's age and physical abilities.
6. Mental health services, required and requested.
7. Regular and frequent visitation with family members.
8. Regular and frequent visitation with friends.
9. Regular contact with caseworker and other persons providing services by phone or in person.
10. Privacy, within the limits of family living. Children may share a room and will eat with other members of the family.
11. Adequate storage space for personal possessions.
12. Mail without censorship.
13. Private conversations with family, friends, caseworker or service providers.
14. Reasonable access to the telephone congruent with child's age. Telephone access to LCCS and for emergency purposes at all times.
15. Practice the religion of his/her biological parents. A child shall NOT be required to practice any religion.
16. Reasonable access to biological parents and significant others via telephone.
17. Children will be taught the consequences of their behaviors. (Don't use physical discipline—try alternative methods.)

Child Development and the Developmental Domains

Infancy (ages 0-2)

PHYSICAL

- Attempting to gain control of the body

COGNITIVE

- No object permanence until 9-12 mos.
- Short attention span

EMOTIONAL

- Dependent on others to predict needs and wants
- Stranger anxiety

SOCIAL

- Need much consistency and stability
- May be shy with strangers

Pre-school (ages 2-5)

PHYSICAL

- Rapid growth and development

COGNITIVE

- Language development
- Underdeveloped sense of time and sequence of events
- Underdeveloped cause and effect thinking
- Magical thinking

EMOTIONAL

- Struggle to develop autonomy and independence

SOCIAL

- Becoming increasingly interactive
- Begin to play cooperatively, but still need high levels of supervision

School Age (ages 6-10)

PHYSICAL

- Growth is slow and steady
- Need high levels of activity

COGNITIVE

- Concrete thinking
- Rules and fairness are extremely important
- Increased concept of time and sequencing

EMOTIONAL

- Self regard is tied to their performance
- Need structure and encouragement

SOCIAL

- Expanded social circle
- Friends of same sex are very important
- Do not like to be different
- Loyal
- Begin to understand right and wrong

Pre-Teen (ages 10-12)

PHYSICAL

- Onset of puberty (especially in girls)

COGNITIVE

- Begin to think abstractly
- Able to accept the perspective of others

EMOTIONAL

- Identity is still tied to family, but peers are becoming more important

SOCIAL

- Needs frequent reassurance and guidance
- Circle of friends becomes wider

Early Teen (ages 13-14)

PHYSICAL

- Most girls have begun menstruation
- Boys experience the onset of puberty
- Wide disparity in physical developmental ranges

COGNITIVE

- Most can think abstractly

EMOTIONAL

- Wide range of emotions; feelings vary from minute to minute
- Demand independence but continue to need adult limits
- Self-centered

SOCIAL

- Embarrassed to ask for adult assistance
- Very status-conscious
- Peer group is extremely important
- Begin to turn away from family

Middle Teen (ages 15-17)

PHYSICAL

- Secondary sex characteristics are well developed (some boys may be in early stages of physical development)

COGNITIVE

- Can tackle very complex issues
- Able to think hypothetically

EMOTIONAL

- Becoming self-reliant
- Continue to need peer acceptance
- Beginning to form own identity

SOCIAL

- Forming romantic relationships
- Begin to focus on the future
- Can make ethical decisions for themselves
- Selecting their own value system