

STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

ADOPTION SERVICES

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CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.0 ADOPTION SERVICES PROGRAM STATEMENT

Child and Family Services Agencies (CFSAs) believe that all children are entitled to grow up in families that can provide them with safe, stable, and permanent homes. As such, permanency planning is integral to every child and family case plan. When the CFSA has explored and exhausted all possible options with the child and family, and it is found to be necessary to permanently remove the child from the home, an alternative permanent placement is sought. The primary goal of adoption services is to ensure safety and permanency for all children.

CFSAs accomplish the identification of alternative permanent homes, and the placement of children in those homes, through an array of services and service supports oriented toward the best interest of children.

The separation of children from their birth parents, and subsequent permanent placement with another family, is a service that requires utmost care and in-depth study. It cannot be undertaken without a real understanding of the effect that this decision will have on the children, birth parents, and adoptive parents. The adoption process is very deliberate so that the many family system dynamics of the potential adoptive home, including the adoptive parents' ability to meet the child's needs, can be clearly understood.

Through the continuum of adoptive services, from recruitment to post adoption support, CFSAs strive to provide all waiting children with permanent, safe and stable homes.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.1 COMBINED CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL FOR FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14.7 (Services for Adoptive Applicants) and S21.8 (Foster Parent and Kinship Caregivers) link to and support Standard 7.1 *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-48-011 (Agency Adoption Policy); 5101:2-48-04 (Adoption Policy); 5101:2-48-06 (Restrictions Concerning Provision Of Adoption Services); 5101:2-48-10 (Release Of Adoptive Assessment and Related Information); 5101:2-48-12 (Completion of a Home Study Report); and 5101:2-48-12 (Completion of a Home Study Report); 5101:2-5-091 (Criminal Records Check Required for Certain Prospective Employees and Certified Foster Caregivers); 5101:2-5-13 (Required Agency Policy); 5101:2-5-20 (Application for an Initial Family Foster Home Certificate); 5101:2-5-21 (Agency Assessment of an Initial Application for Family Foster Home Certificate); 5101:2-5-22 (Recommendations for Initial Family Foster Home Certification or Denial of Initial Family Foster Home Certification); 5101:2-5-23 (Form and Duration of a Family Foster Home Certification); 5101:2-5-28 (Cause for Denial of Initial Certification, Denial of Re-certification or Revocation of a Family Foster Home Certificate); 5101:2-5-33 (Foster Caregiver Orientation and Training); 5101:2-7-02 (General Requirements to be Certified as a Foster Caregiver) through 5101:2-7-15 (Transportation); address Standard 7.1 *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*.

*Items with an asterisk indicates that this Standard is based on effective practice, however, it does not currently comply with the Ohio Administrative Code (which requires the applicant complete the certification and approval process regardless of ineligibility).

I. Philosophy

Children are entitled to out-of-home placement and permanent homes, which are safe, stable, and provide for their physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, cultural, educational, social and developmental needs. In keeping with the philosophy "one placement per child", timely and thorough assessments of applicants as certified foster families and as approved adoptive families maximize the likelihood of permanency for children, minimizing multiple placements. The assessment of foster and adoptive homes requires a strong partnership between the agency and the potential caregiver.

II. Outcome

Families care for and aid in the transition of children toward permanency through reunification or adoption.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of personal responses made to prospective applicants within two working days;
- number of summarized information packets sent to prospective applicants within three to five days of the inquiries;
- number of prospective applicants per year;
- number of prospective applicants qualifying per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all necessary paperwork per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all training requirements per year;
- number of prospective applicants certified or approved per year;
- number of foster or adoptive families recruited, certified or approved from targeted neighborhoods;
- number of foster families that transfer or terminate license per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Inquiries

Child and Family Services Agencies acknowledge that an expedient response to foster care and adoption inquiries is critical to the recruitment process. Introducing prospective applicants to these programs exposes them to the needs of children and families', requirements for fostering and adopting, and increases the public's understanding of the foster care and adoption processes in Ohio.

- 1) The designated CFSA representative should personally respond to each prospective applicant within two working days of receiving the inquiry.
- 2) All inquiries made to staff representatives should be forwarded immediately to the designated CFSA representative to provide the personal response within two working days.
- 3) CSFAs should send the following summarized information within 3-5 working days to those inquiries that are interested in continuing with the licensing and approval process:
 - a. CFSA mission/purpose statement;
 - b. statement of general need for foster and adoptive homes that meet the current needs based on target populations (e.g., age, race, ethnicity, special needs, geographic location);
 - c. statement regarding available options and opportunities to foster and/or adopt;
 - d. certification and approval requirements including:
 - i. the application process;
 - ii. the training and schedule of training events;
 - iii. the home study process;
 - iv. the home safety and fire inspection;
 - v. a copy of the marriage certificate and/or divorce decree, complete financial statement, complete medical form, authorization for release of information (ROI), access to criminal records information and five references (no more than two related);
 - e. summary of minimum state requirements to become an approved foster/adoptive applicant;

- f. summary of CFSA foster care and adoption policies and the Ohio Adoption Guide; and
- g. availability of on-site/website review of Ohio's children.

B. Qualifying Application Requests

Agencies acknowledge that inclusive practices for qualifying foster or adoptive applicants increase the pool of families available for children when needed for placement. The focus of inclusivity is to challenge the agency's

- 1) All applicants need to be viewed in terms of the agency and state policies for foster or adoptive homes. Considerations for continuing with the licensing and approval process are:
 - a. prospective applicant is at least 21 years old*;
 - b. prospective applicant has not been convicted of a felony as defined in the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Administrative Code;
 - c. prospective applicant's marital/live-in status has been stable twelve months prior to the application;
 - d. prospective applicant has not had involvement with a CFSA that would cause the CFSA to deem the applicant ineligible.

**This standard is based on effective practice, however, it does not currently comply with the Ohio Revised Code (which allows 18 year olds to unilaterally apply for, and be approved to, foster and/or adopt).*

C. Foster Care and Adoption Services for Individuals Directly Affiliated with the Agencies

Agencies believe that a conflict of interest exists for an agency staff member, Board member, or member of the Citizens Review Board to receive foster care and adoption services from the agency with which these individuals are affiliated. The agency should link these prospective applicants to another agency, which should provide comparable and timely services (e.g., homestudy, updates, placement, support, supervision) that would have otherwise been provided by the originating agency. The referring agency should document having done so.

D. Certification/Approval Process

Certifying/approving a foster/adoptive home is based on a process of mutual assessment of the applicant's suitability. Both the applicant and the CFSA must fully participate in the process to assure the decision to certify and approve the home is based on accurate, thorough, and complete information. CSFAs should use assessment methods that are culturally appropriate to the applicant and assist applicants in meeting basic qualification requirements. The certification/approval process should be as expedient as possible.

- 1) The foster family/adoption application should be provided within three working days of the request.
- 2) The CFSA should initiate the certification and approval process within ten working days of receiving the application form.
- 3) When the CFSA determines the applicant to be ineligible for certification and approval, the CFSA will inform the applicant of the reason of ineligibility and their right to voluntarily withdraw the application, and sends the applicant written notification and a copy of the agency grievance process within five working days.

**This Standard is based on effective practice, however, it does not currently comply with the Ohio Administrative Code (which requires the applicant complete the certification and*

approval process regardless of ineligibility). It is recommended that an Ohio statewide database be developed to track the foster/adoptive homes that have been denied for licensure and/or recertification. It is also recommended that CFSAs can access an Ohio statewide database to check for abuse/neglect reports on foster/adoptive applicants.

- 4) As part of the certification and approval of the home, the staff should schedule a minimum of four face-to-face contacts, two of which are in the family's home:
 - a. one of the interviews should involve each member of the household individually, including any children over the age of four as appropriate to their ages and level of understanding;
 - b. two interviews should involve the primary caregiver(s);
 - c. if there are two caregivers, one joint interview should occur;
 - d. one joint interview with the entire household members.

Face-to-face visits should include a discussion regarding the roles, responsibilities, and differences between fostering and adoption.

- 5) The certification and approval process should include, but not be limited to, the following components:
 - a. participation and completion in the agency's pre-service training;
 - b. applicant's prior history with any children services agency;
 - c. completed criminal background check (BCI and I, FBI, local records) on the applicant and all adult household members;
 - d. completed juvenile record and Children Services check on all children in the household age 10 and over;
 - e. medical history (including, but not limited to: drug and alcohol abuse and treatment and treatment for psychological/psychiatric disorders);
 - f. documentation of income and expenses/financial statement form;
 - g. five references (two can be relatives) from individuals who know the applicant family and can comment on the applicant's ability to interact with children;
 - h. approved fire inspection report;
 - i. completed assessment form;
 - j. approved safety audit;
 - k. individual interviews with each member of the applicant family over the age of four;
 - l. approval and documentation of the applicant's emergency and alternative care plan, and applicant's support system to assist in the care of the children;
 - m. history of each family member including childhood and family experiences which reflect the individual's psychological and social adjustment;
 - n. history of applicant's relationships, including marital, primary, extended family, and significant others;
 - o. exploration of stressors and applicant's response to these, their coping skills, and problem-solving abilities;
 - p. exploration of infertility, and other loss issues of applicant(s);
 - q. exploration of the family's ability to accept individual differences and unique attributes;
 - r. exploration of disciplinary techniques, positive and negative aspects of parenting, as well as parenting children with a history of abuse and neglect;
 - s. applicant's ability to recognize and acknowledge family member's feelings and needs, including their own;
 - t. exploration of the applicant and extended family's view of foster care/adoption;
 - u. exploration of the applicant's interest in foster care/adoption of any sibling should other biological sibling need placement in the future;

- v. applicant's expectations of child/family relationship, the ability to support the child's coping with past, the understanding of identity issues, including child's potential desire to search and connect with biological family;
 - w. determination of the applicant's ability and willingness to parent, as well as partner and work as a team with the biological family and agency, including the willingness to become a mentor/co-parent with the biological family;
 - x. assessment of the applicant's capacity and willingness to value, respect, appreciate, support, and educate a child regardless of the child's racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage, spirituality, background, and language;
 - y. determination of the applicant's strengths and needs to parent children in need of a placement;
 - z. discussion regarding the child's gender, age, race, and special needs who may be placed in the home;
 - aa. other as identified by the CFSA.
- 6) Barring circumstances outside of the CFSA control, the assessment process should be completed within ninety days from the time the CFSA receives the completed application form and the applicant has completed the required pre-service training and necessary documentation.
- a. When the applicant fails to follow through with assessment process requirements, the CFSA should contact the applicant to discuss the applicant's continued level of interest. When the certification and approval process is terminated due to a lack of follow-through by applicant, the CFSA should notify the applicant within thirty days prior to termination.
 - b. Notification should include the reason for the termination, the CFSA grievance process, (the State "fair hearing" process when applicable), and a description as to how the application may be reactivated. Termination should occur within sixty days of the completed pre-service training and provided application form.*
- 7) The staff should notify the applicant in writing of the assessment determination within five working days of the decision. The staff should prepare a letter for the applicant which outlines the following:
- a. date of the CFSA decision;
 - b. determination of applicant's status regarding fostering and/or adoption;
 - c. characteristics and number of children approved to foster/adopt;
 - d. homestudy update process;
 - e. reason for the determination; and
 - f. CFSA grievance process.
- 8) When, at any time during the assessment process the applicant requests a delay or hold on the process, and when the CFSA and the applicant mutually agree to delay the study, the applicant should be sent a letter documenting the request. A copy should be placed in the applicant's file. While delays can be common, the process must be completed in a year. After twelve months of the initial application, the process will be terminated by the CFSA.

E. CFSA Responsibilities to Foster/Adoptive Families

- 1) During the foster care certification and approval process, the CFSA should present and explain to the family the agency's responsibilities to the foster/adoptive family which include, but not be limited to, the following:
- a. description of the agency's mission, values, expectations and goals as they relate to foster/adoptive families;

- b. the organizational structure of the agency and how the foster/adoptive family will receive support within that structure;
- c. a clear description of the roles and responsibilities of the agency staff and the rights and responsibilities of the foster/adoptive family;
- d. a discussion of the ways the agency will work to assist the foster/adoptive family with acquiring the information and skills needed to perform the role, as well as the ongoing training opportunities available within the agency and the community;
- e. the matching and placement process, along with the family's role in finding the right child for their home (see Standard 6.1, *Placement of Children in Out-Of-Home Care*);
- f. the general visitation plans for children with their parents, siblings and other identified significant persons and the foster/adoptive family role with these primary family members;
- g. the family's role with partnering with birth families and agency, including open adoption;
- h. the agency's policies for accessing and maintaining the child's health care and educational needs;
- i. the information that will be shared with the foster/adoptive family regarding the child, including the case plan, child's medical, behavioral, social, legal and educational history, reasons for placement, special needs of the child and particular challenges the family may face and resources available to service those needs and challenges;
- j. periodic review requirement for foster/adoptive family including the training needs assessment and ongoing training requirements;
- k. the established rate scale for fostering and availability of adoption subsidies;
- l. process for securing permanency for children in care and the foster/adoptive family role;
- m. processes and resources available for problem resolution in lieu of placement disruption;
- n. available agency supports for the ongoing mental health of the foster/adoptive family (see Standard 6.8, *Supports for Foster Caregivers* and 8.12 *Post-Adoption Services*);
- o. agency policy on liability/damages incurred as a result of the child in the foster/adoptive family home;
- p. processes available through the agency for resolution of conflicts and concerns, as well as the process to investigate rule violations and allegations of misconduct through the third party structure; and
- q. availability of agency and community family support associations as a vehicle to ensure the foster/adoptive family's ongoing voice in child welfare solutions.

F. The Rights of Family Caregivers

- 1) During the certification and approval process, the CFSA should present and explain to the family the scope of their rights, which include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. to be respected, valued, and have his/her opinions be heard and included as a member of the child's treatment team in the decisions being made affecting the life of children placed in the caregiver's home;
 - b. to not be discriminated against, including but not limited to, on the basis of the religion, race, color, creed, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or physical handicap;

- c. to receive the agency's current policies and procedures which clearly outline the rights, responsibilities and roles of the foster caregiver, the agency and the child's family and methods of conflict resolution;
- d. to receive information regarding the placed child including the case plan, child's medical, behavioral, social, legal and educational history, reasons for placement, special needs of the child and particular challenges the family may face and resources available to service those needs and challenges;
- e. to receive appropriate and reasonable guidance and support from the recommending agency, including the means by which the caregiver can contact the agency 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the purpose of receiving assistance;
- f. to participate in pre-service training, ongoing training and appropriate programming for all members of the family which enhance the skill and ability to cope in the role as a caregiving family;
- g. to be informed, prior to placement and during placement, of issues relative to the child and his/her family which may jeopardize the health and safety of the caregiver family or alter the manner in which foster care is administered;
- h. to refuse placement of a child within the caregiver's home, or to request (upon reasonable notice to the agency) the removal of a child from the home for good reason, without the threat of reprisal*;
- i. to receive support in dealing with family loss and separation when a child leaves a home;
- j. to be considered for a child formerly placed in the caregiver's home who returns to foster care;
- k. to be considered as the permanent family for the child in their home who is legally available for adoption;
- l. to receive and provide regular (quarterly, at minimum) feedback on both the agency and family performance;
- m. to receive adequate and timely reimbursement for the approved expenses of the child in care;
- n. to participate in the development and implementation of a respite plan that meets the needs of the child and the family;
- o. to receive, upon request, a copy of information that is legally allowable relative to the caregiver family and services contained in the foster home record of the agency;
- p. to be provided a fair, timely and impartial investigation of complaints concerning the caregiver's home, including a respectful process for resolution of conflicts regarding the role as caregiver with the agency and be able to seek out support persons of the caregiver's choice who will agree to comply with confidentiality;
- q. to participate in, and communicate regularly with, associations for caregiving families and support groups;
- r. to be free to question agency's policies and practices and be free of maltreatment without fear of reprisal; and
- s. to receive written conflict resolution and grievance policies that are consistent with due process.

G. Family Responsibilities to the Child and CFSA

- 1) During the certification and approval process, the CFSA should present and explain to the family, the scope of their responsibilities, which include, but not be limited to the following:
 - a. make decisions on behalf of the child in the day to day parenting role;

- b. treat the child in care and the child's family with dignity, respect and consideration;
- c. provide care and services that are responsive to the child's needs and support the relationship between the child and his/her family;
- d. recognize problems in the home that require outside advice and assistance and to seek help;
- e. respect the confidentiality of information received;
- f. understand and work toward the plan related to the child in the home;
- g. advocate for the best interest of the child in care and his/her family;
- h. participate as a member of the child's treatment team, including but not limited to attending SARs and conferences;
- i. support the visitation plan for the child with the parents, siblings and other identified significant others, and participate as appropriate;
- j. accompany the child, and possibly the family, to medical, physical, psychological and other needed appointments and services, and submit the reports to the CFSA;
- k. maintain accurate and relevant records regarding the child's activities and progress;
- l. assist in enrolling and participating in the child's involvement in school;
- m. report serious illnesses/accidents of family members or members of household;
- n. discuss with the agency and report changes/additions in family or household composition and prior to change, whenever possible;
- o. report housing relocations prior to move;
- p. agree not to accept additional placements from other agencies without the approval by the CFSA that holds the family's license and to abide by the CFSA decision regarding the same;
- q. report any arrests or criminal charges or convictions within 24 hours for all members of the household;
- r. request permission from the CFSA if the child will be leaving the CFSA jurisdiction for more than 24 consecutive hours;
- s. sign-off, and abide by, the CFSA rules, policies, procedures governing the CFSA foster care and adoption programs.

H. Training

Formal orientation and pre-service trainings introduce the prospective applicant to the needs of the child requiring foster care and adoption, and to the challenges and responsibilities of both.

- 1) Agency should offer an Orientation Training on a regular basis that introduces prospective applicants to the foster care and adoption process and to the agency.
- 2) The CFSA should schedule and conduct Pre-Service training on a quarterly basis, at minimum, and/or agency should refer the applicant to other resources for similar training if training is not available.
- 3) Each applicant should attend and complete the Pre-Service Training, as prescribed by the CFSA prior to the completion of the home study process.
- 4) Pre-Service should include a thorough review, and allow for discussion regarding the differences between fostering and adoption and the responsibilities inherent in each.

- 5) The Pre-Service process should assure that the applicant has access to experienced foster and/or adoptive parents who can assist in providing hands-on information regarding fostering and adopting a child.
- 6) Families who parent adolescents should receive, within the first year of service, the CFSA self-sufficiency/independent living training provided to caregivers and staff as outlined in Standard 8.3, *Caregiver and Staff Training*.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families* total:

30 hours per family x \$89.25/hour = \$2,677.50 per family.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
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7.2 REEVALUATION OF FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTIVE HOMES

Council on Accreditation Standard

The Council on Accreditation Standard S21.10 (Foster and Kinship Families and Homes) links to and supports Standard 7.2 *Reevaluation of Foster and Adoptive Homes*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-48-07 (Adoptive Homestudy Process); 5101:2-5-24 (Family Foster Home Recertification Procedure); 5101:2-5-25 (Denial Of Recertification of a Family Foster Home Certificate); 5101:2-5-26 (Revocation of a Family Foster Home Certificate); 5101:2-5-28 (Cause for Denial of Initial Certification, Denial of Recertification or Revocation of a Family Foster Home Certification); 5101:2-7-02 (General Requirements to be Certified as a Foster Caregiver); and 5101:2-7-14 (Required Notification) address Standard 7.2 *Reevaluation of Foster and Adoptive Homes*.

I. Philosophy

Teamwork between the CFSA and foster/adoptive family is essential for successful permanency planning for children in out-of-home care. The reassessment process builds on the principles established in Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*. The reassessment process strengthens the partnership between families and CFSA's through open and honest dialogue about strengths, growth areas, needs, wants and concerns. Reassessment determines families' continued ability to parent children in care and is also an opportunity for families to reassess the CFSA.

II. Outcome

Foster/adoptive families provide safe, stable and permanent placements.

Foster/adoptive families meet the needs of the children in their home.

Children experience no placement disruptions or lateral moves.

III. Evaluation

FACSYS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of foster and adoptive families certified and approved;
- number of foster families that transfer or terminate license per year;
- number of foster or adoptive families out of compliance per year;
- number of foster or adoptive families out of compliance but resolved per year;
- number of denial of continued licensure or approval of the home per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Annual Reevaluation and Continued Approval of Foster and Adoptive Homes

- 1) The CFSA should, with the caregiver(s), assess the strengths, growth areas, needs, wants, and concerns of the caregiver(s) to successfully parent by;
 - a. conducting a face-to-face interview with all household members over the age of four within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of the home certification and approval;
 - b. observing and assessing interaction of members in the household;
 - c. discussing and documenting any significant changes in the family, including, but not limited to: health, household composition, supports, resources, employment;
 - d. assessing and documenting the family's experiences in supporting all of the child's needs;
 - e. making collateral contact with service providers and agency's professionals who have worked with the foster/adoptive family in the past year with agency required signed release form; and
 - f. developing a plan to maintain strengths and respond to outstanding concerns, issues and needs.
- 2) The CFSA should recommend approval of the family home when it is documented the home is in compliance with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and agency regulations.
- 3) In cases where the CFSA determines that the foster family is non-compliant with ODJFS and agency regulations, the CFSA should determine whether to request a waiver from ODJFS, create a corrective action plan with the family and provide identified services, or recommend a denial.
- 4) If the family is out of compliance with ODJFS and/or agency requirements, the CFSA should not place additional children in the home until compliance is achieved.

B. Communication and Resolution

- 1) In agreement with Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Homes*, a collaborative process should be used to resolve issues or concerns, including:
 - a. discussing the results of the annual reassessment and continued approval, denial or revocation for foster/adoptive licensure with the family;
 - b. providing written information on agency's decisions and corrective action plans, if applicable;
 - c. maintaining and utilizing a formal grievance process, per agency policy, for staff and families when the CFSA has determined that a foster care licensure be revoked or the application of adoption be denied due to non-compliance.

C. Revocation of Foster Family Licensure and Adoption Denial

- 1) In cases where the family is non-compliant and a waiver, variance or corrective action plan is deemed inappropriate, the CFSA should recommend denial of continued licensure or approval of the home.

- 2) When the family fails to comply with the corrective action plan, the CFSA should recommend revocation of licensure and/or denial of adoption and remove the child currently residing in the home.
- 3) The CFSA should inform the foster/adoptive family of their right to a state grievance hearing as per the Ohio Administrative Code.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.2, *Reevaluation of Foster Care and Adoptive Homes* include home visits, assessment, recertification requests, and appeals by home when license is denied or revoked, for:

Average of 32 hours per family per year x \$89.25/hour = \$2,856 per foster family home.

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7.3 RECRUITMENT OF ADOPTIVE HOMES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services); S14.2 (Administrative Practices); and S14.3 (Services to the Child) link to and support Standard 7.3 *Recruitment of Adoptive Homes*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Agency Recruitment Plan) addresses Standard 7.3 *Recruitment of Adoptive Homes*.

I. Philosophy

The goal of CFSA's is to find permanent families for all children versus finding children for families. CFSA's conduct or participate in state general adoption recruitment activities, as well as child specific recruitment activities at the community level to assure sufficient adoptive placement resources that reflect the race, culture and ethnicity of all Ohio children in permanent custody. All Ohio's CFSA's need to be responsible for the recruitment efforts of adoptive families for all of Ohio's waiting children.

II. Outcome

Children in the permanent custody of CFSA will live in a safe, stable permanent home that meets all of his/her individual needs.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of prospective applicants per year;
- number of prospective applicants qualifying per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all necessary paperwork per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all training requirements per year;
- number of prospective applicants certified or approved per year;
- number of adoptive families recruited and approved;
- number of aggressive recruitment plans developed within seven days of receiving permanent custody of children;
- number of aggressive recruitment activities conducted after children have been in permanent custody for thirty days or more;
- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. General Recruitment Efforts

- 1) The CFSA and the state agency (ODJFS) should develop an aggressive annual adoption recruitment plan. Emphasis should be placed on recruiting families that reflect the race, culture and ethnicity of all waiting children.
- 2) The CFSA should participate in ongoing media-based activities to promote the need for adoptive homes in both the CFSA's jurisdiction and state-wide. Media-based activities should include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. newspaper articles;
 - b. public service announcements;
 - c. radio talk shows;
 - d. articles in newsletters of local organizations and faith-based organizations; internet, agency's website.
- 3) The CFSA should have an agency-specific brochure describing available adoption opportunities, the types of children available for adoption locally and statewide, and the CFSA's adoption services.
- 4) The CFSA should participate in scheduled district/region adoption networking/matching opportunities.
- 5) The CFSA should participate in the statewide listing, including the internet.
- 6) The CFSA should take every opportunity to educate the community about the need for permanent homes for all waiting children.
- 7) The CFSA should encourage all staff to participate in recruitment efforts because recruitment of foster and adoptive families is the responsibility of every person in the CFSA.
- 8) The CFSA should provide a warm, welcoming response in a timely basis to each individual responding to recruitment efforts undertaken by the agency.

B. Child Specific Recruitment Activities

- 1) At the time permanent custody is filed, review the permanency plan created when the child entered placement at an intra-agency meeting and revise within seven working days to reflect the recruitment activities the CFSA will conduct in its effort to identify an adoptive resource for the waiting child (see Standard 7.4, *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning*).
- 2) The child specific recruitment plan, as written in the case plan, should be reviewed at each semi-annual review (SAR).
- 3) In cases where no family has been identified for the child that has been in permanent custody of the CFSA for more than thirty days, with no potential adoptive family match, the CFSA should conduct the following child-specific recruitment activities:
 - a. complete or revisit the relative search, as well as contact significant persons in the child's life, which could include but not be limited to: teachers, neighbors, previous caregivers that could be a potential prospective adoptive family;

- b. develop a photo/narrative promotion flyer of the child and distribute it to other Ohio CFSA adoption units and agencies in the community and throughout the country;
- c. videotape the waiting child for distribution in other counties, as information to groups, for use as public service announcements (PSAs), etc.;
- d. register the child with the statewide photo listing and other waiting child photo listings;
- e. place the child's promotion flyer in a photo book which is used when the adoption unit attends community events, scheduled inter-agency adoption activities, etc.;
- f. seek out and document attendance at other CFSA scheduled community adoption recruitment activities, and/or plan community adoption recruitment events that are appropriate for the CFSA's waiting children to attend;
- g. make contact with organization(s) that serve the population of individuals with similar special needs to identify potential adoptive families;
- h. contact community organizations and send the child's promotion flyer to organization(s) willing to place the child's flyer in the their newsletter.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.3, *Recruitment of Adoptive Homes*, direct services, staffing, case review, and case planning costs, are included within the Ongoing Protective Services Standards.

Other costs, such as agency pamphlet describing adoption policies and children available for adoption, videotaping, PSA's, etc., would be an additional cost to the agency. Costs could range from \$0 for those services that are donated, to \$10,000 annually.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILD FOR PERMANENCY PLANNING

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.3 (Services to the Child) link to and support Standard 7.4 *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-42-18.1 (MEPA/IEPA); 5101:2-48-03 (Social Medical History); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Agency Agreements); 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Recruitment Plan); 5101:2-48-06 (Adoption Agency Staffing); 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement); 5101:2-48-16 (Adoptive Placement Procedures); 5101:2-48-21 (Child Study Inventory); and 5101:2-42-67 (Preparation of Lifebook) address Standard 7.4 *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning*.

I. Philosophy

The primary purpose of assessing the needs of children as part of the permanency planning process is to assure that children's best interests are served by being placed with families who match their short and long-term individual needs.

II. Outcome

Children grow up in safe, permanent families that meet their needs.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the number of child and family assessments that are completed and reviewed at point of entry, key decision-making points, case transfer and prior to adoption;
- number of concurrent plans developed at point of entry and modified throughout that identifies possible adoptive matches for the child;
- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) The assessment process should be initiated at the time the child comes into care and be updated on an ongoing basis to allow the child's assessment to be kept current with the child's development (see Standard 3.1, *The Child and Family Assessment*).

- 2) The staff should collect and document information regarding the child including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. child's siblings and their whereabouts;
 - b. plan to maintain siblings together in placement or the visitation/plan for contact when the decision has been documented that a sibling group must be separated;
 - c. type of environment the child has been living in prior to agency involvement, including:
 - i. urban or rural setting,
 - ii. racial composition of neighborhood,
 - iii. socio-economic background of family,
 - iv. ethnicity,
 - v. religion,
 - vi. parental philosophy regarding discipline;
 - d. type of environment the child has been living in following agency involvement including, but not limited to, the following:
 - i. urban or rural setting,
 - ii. racial composition of neighborhood,
 - iii. socio-economic background of family,
 - iv. ethnicity,
 - v. religion,
 - vi. parental philosophy regarding discipline;
 - e. persons, places and/or things with whom the child has significant attachments or bonds;
 - f. significant others in the child's life (phone numbers and addresses) and regularity and types of contact;
 - g. child's medical history and current medical needs;
 - h. birth parents' social and medical history;
 - i. child's personality characteristics;
 - j. chronological listing of the child's significant life events;
 - k. anniversary dates of the child's significant life events;
 - l. review of the child's lifebook for completeness, and completion of the lifebook if not current and up-to-date;
 - m. any information on the child's culture and past and present emotional, psychological, behavioral, medical, social, and educational functioning; and
 - n. child's perception of self and his/her feelings about the current situation as appropriate to his/her age.

V. Financial Implications

There are no additional costs associated with Standard 7.4, *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning* other than those mentioned in the Standards under Ongoing Protective Services, Out-Of-Home Care Services and Administration.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.5 PREPARING CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.3 (Services to the Child) link to and support Standard 7.5 *Preparing Children for Adoption*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-42-67 (Preparation of Lifebook); 5101:2-48-03 (Requirements of ODHS Social and Medical History); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Agency Responsibilities); 5101:2-48-21 (Child Study Inventory); and 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement) address Standard 7.5 *Preparing Children for Adoption*.

I. Philosophy

Preparing children for adoption should begin prior to the time permanent custody is filed and should assist the child with processing separation from the birth family. Children should be prepared prior to, up to, and following the point at which the placement is made and the adoption is finalized. Children need to be given honest information based on their developmental level. It is important to help the child process his/her grief resulting from separation and loss. It is essential for the future adjustment for both the child and the birth family to be given an opportunity to say "good-bye".

Preparation improves the readiness level of children for an adoptive placement. Therefore, CFSA's regard the preparation of children as necessary and primary to their best interest, long-term adjustment and well-being.

II. Outcome

Children are prepared to successfully transition to the adoptive home.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- documentation that all children in permanent custody have had an opportunity to discuss feelings about adoption, input about permanency plan and identifying potential relationships to maintain;
- number of good-bye visits held by the agency with the children and children's family within ninety days of obtaining permanent custody;
- number of pre-placement activities and visits held per child and prospective adoptive family;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;

- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization;
- number of weekly visits made by agency staff during first month of placement in the adoptive home;
- number of adoptions that disrupt per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Prior to Permanent Custody

Prior to seeking permanent custody, the CFSA should:

- 1) explain to the child why he/she cannot return home;
- 2) discuss the meaning of permanent custody, the process and the possible outcomes;
- 3) obtain child's input/feelings regarding permanency plan;
- 4) gather information about the child and birth family; and
- 5) clarify with child the potential to maintain relationships with significant family members/persons in his/her life.

B. Between Permanent Custody and Adoptive Placement

- 1) The child should be provided with a good-bye visit with his/her birth family within ninety days of obtaining permanent custody.
 - a. The birth family, worker, and the adoption worker should jointly prepare the birth family for the good-bye visit by informing the birth family of their need to assure child of three things:
 - i. they will always love them;
 - ii. it is alright to love someone else and to be happy in the new family; and
 - iii. give permission to move on.
 - b. An appropriate comfortable location should be secured for the visit.
 - c. Plans should be made for a separate support person for the child and another for the birth family to be available afterwards to process the visit.
 - d. The visit should be preserved for the future. At a minimum, pictures should be taken, but ideally the visit should be audio/video taped. The child and the birth family should both receive a copy of the pictures and/or video/audio tape.
 - e. The birth family should be encouraged to bring a special gift for the child, and the child should be encouraged to make a special gift for the birth family.
 - f. In situations where there is an agreement for ongoing contact with birth family members after adoption, this visit should be adapted to bring closure to the idea of the child returning to live with birth family, while allowing for the transition to the level of contact agreed upon for the future.
 - g. If good-bye visits are not possible with the child's birth family, the social worker should work with the child and current caregiver to provide some event/experience of closure.
- 2) Preparation for the child should occur at every visit the child has with a counselor and/or agency worker. The following activities should occur at these visits:
 - a. updating the Lifebook;
 - b. process child's feelings regarding separation and loss from birth family and feelings about being adopted;

- c. discuss the type of adoptive family the child would like and the child's expectations of adoption;
 - d. discuss the level of openness for his/her adoption (see Standard 7.15, *Openness in Adoption*);
 - e. discuss the recruitment plan and the role the child will play in the recruitment activities. If age appropriate, the child should be asked to identify important persons in his/her past, to include kinship connections and blood relatives;
 - f. providing to the child information about the family and the family's photo/narrative scrapbook should be shared and processed with the child.
- 3) The child should participate in the planned recruitment activities.
 - 4) The child should participate in pre-placement activities/visits with the prospective adoptive family (see Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home*).
 - 5) The prospective adoptive family and child should be linked to community resources and services to support the transition.
 - 6) The worker should explain the planned permanency activities to the foster family to assist in the transition of the child to the new family.
 - 7) The staff should have regular conversations with the foster family to gain additional information regarding the child's behavior including: likes and dislikes, fears, concerns, and share these with the prospective adoptive family. If possible, the foster family should directly share information regarding the child with the prospective adoptive family.

C. Adoptive Placement Through Finalization

- 1) If appropriate, the foster family should visit the child in his/her adoptive home to ease the transition.
- 2) The CFSA worker should provide support and assess the adjustment of the child and the family at each visit to the home. Weekly visits by the agency worker should be provided for the first month after placement in the adoptive home.
- 3) The worker should discuss with the child and adoptive family what the name of the child will be.
- 4) The agency worker should prepare the adoptive family and child for the finalization hearing (including taking the child to the court where the finalization will occur).

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.5, *Preparing Children for Adoption* are the costs associated with the counselor to prepare the child for permanency (if other than the CFSA staff).

Cost impact could be \$75 per weekly visit x 52 weeks = \$3,900 annually per child. These sessions could be billed to Medicaid or PASSS if the child is eligible.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.6 MATCHING

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.3 (Services for the Child) link to and support Standard 7.6 *Matching*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-42-18.1 (MEPA/IEPA); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Responsibilities); 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Agency Recruitment Plan); 5101: 2-48-06 (Adoption Agency Staffing); 5101: 2-48-07 (Listing and Withdrawing Families and Children with OAPL); 5101:2-48-11 (Approval of a Family Foster Home for Adoptive Placements); 5101:2-48-13 (Adoption Requirements Pursuant to the Multiethnic Placement Act); 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement); 5101:2-48-15 (Provision of Information to Adoptive Family); 5101:2-48-17 (Prefinalization Services); 5101:2-48-19 (Release of Adoptive Homestudy and Related Information); 5101:2-48-20 (Release of Identifying and Non-Identifying Information); and 5101:2-48-21 (Child Study Inventory) address Standard 7.6 *Matching*.

*Items with an asterisk indicates that this Standard is based on effective practice, however, it does not currently comply with the Ohio Administrative Code.

I. Philosophy

The matching process is critical not only when planning for the permanent placement of children, but also when a child enters substitute care (see Out-of-Home Standard 6.1, *Placement of Children in Out-of-Home Care*). To increase the likelihood that a successful match is made, it is crucial to match the strengths and ability of the family with the individual needs of the child. While many factors are reviewed and considered in determining the best match, consideration should be given to the children's sibling group, kinship and/or foster family relationships, and cultural and social background. CFSAs acknowledge that while ethnicity, culture and race should not be the only determinants in the matching process, recognition as to the importance race, culture and ethnicity plays in human growth and development cannot be ignored*.

II. Outcome

Children in need of permanent homes are adopted by families who meet their identified needs and can support their long-term physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and cultural growth and development.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- the number of child and family assessments that are completed and reviewed at point of entry, key decision-making points, case transfer and prior to adoption;

- number of concurrent plans developed at point of entry and modified throughout that identifies possible adoptive matches for the child;
- number of prospective applicants per year;
- number of prospective applicants qualifying per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all necessary paperwork per year;
- number of prospective applicants completing all training requirements per year;
- number of prospective applicants approved per year;
- number of adoptive families recruited and approved;
- number of aggressive recruitment plans developed within seven days of receiving permanent custody of children;
- number of aggressive recruitment activities conducted after children have been in permanent custody for thirty days or more;
- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization.

IV. Standards for Implementation

For an adoptive placement, consideration should be given first to relatives, then to foster family, kinship relationships, and finally, other adoptive families who can meet the identified and anticipated needs of the child.

- 1) At the point of filing for permanent custody, determination should be made as to the interest of relatives, foster family, adoptive families of biological siblings (if applicable) and kinship relationships, in being a permanent family for the child. If none of these are interested in being a permanent family, the worker sets up a staffing to discuss permanency plan.
- 2) Once the decision has been made to file for permanent custody, a staffing is held, including, at minimum, the adoption worker, adoption supervisor, other involved professionals, the birth family worker and supervisor and the child to identify the child's needs for the Matching Tool (see Standard 7.4, *Assessment of the Child for Permanency Planning*).
- 3) After permanent custody has been received, the adoption worker reviews the child's identified needs and ensures the assessments are up-to-date.
- 4) If relative, foster and kin resources have been exhausted, the adoption worker initiates a recruitment plan to locate potential adoptive families for the child (see Standard 7.4, *Assessment of Children for Permanency Planning*).
- 5) Relevant staff (e.g., the adoption and child's worker) identify potential families to be reviewed using the child's assessment and focusing on the child's needs.
- 6) When the staff have identified potential families, the adoption worker and child's worker should have face-to-face contact with the families prior to the review panel conference in the home or at least at the CFSA's office to further assess the families' compatibility with the child and ability to meet the child's needs. If face-to-face contact is not possible, the adoption worker and child's worker should have telephone contact with each potential family. At this time, the worker should share the child's assessment with the families both verbally and in writing.

- 7) After contact with the families, a review panel conference should be scheduled, which includes all key professionals involved with the child, to select the adoptive home. The conference should include the review of the completed child assessment and available adoptive homes to determine the likelihood of a successful placement using a matching tool that addresses the following areas of current and anticipated needs and strengths of child and family:
 - a. safety that addresses child's health, community and school, home environment, availability of adequate supervision to meet the child's needs, family's relationship with birth family and openness to gather further information;
 - b. permanency that addresses family's willingness to support the permanency plan, family is dually licensed/approved, family's willingness to maintain contact with birth family, siblings, extended family, former foster parents, and significant others;
 - c. stability and continuity, including maintaining the child's current positive psychological relationships, neighborhood, school, extra-curricular activities, faith community and birth family relationships;
 - d. family composition and dynamics, including placement with siblings, maintaining birth order, need for one or two parent home, same sex parents, supervision needs;
 - e. physical environment, including need for child's own bedroom, handicapped-accessibility, if needed;
 - f. family's experiences with partnering with CFSA, working with the birth family, caring for kinship/foster/adoptive children;
 - g. family expectations and lifestyle issues, including comfort with birth parent culture, gay and lesbian youth, spending time with the family, activity level of family, academic and career expectations, religious expectations, the need for cultural connections;
 - h. parenting styles, including the child's required level of structure and supervision, parenting roles, need for specialized parenting skills, types of discipline, family's flexibility and ability to delay gratification, temperament;
 - i. child's therapeutic needs, including family's willingness to participate in therapy and apply to daily living; family understands special educational issues and is willing to advocate on behalf of the child; family is willing to accept limited lifespan of the child, if relevant; family is able to cope with frequent clinic visits or hospitalizations; family is accepting of specific learning disabilities and behavioral challenges;
 - j. family and community support system, including extended family's attitude and support, community resources available to meet short and long-term needs.
- 8) The review panel should include, but not be limited to, the following key professionals:
 - a. child's primary caseworker and supervisor;
 - b. assigned adoption staff and supervisor;
 - c. out-of-home caregiver(s);
 - d. child's therapist and other involved professionals;
 - e. Guardian Ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate;
 - f. child's birth parent(s), if appropriate (e.g., in the circumstance of a permanent surrender when the parent is helping to choose the adoptive family).
- 9) The CFSA should have a policy, which identifies the protocol to follow when consensus cannot be achieved among the review panel participants regarding the best adoption match for the child.

- 10) The families who were not selected as the match should be contacted within 3 working days and encouraged to consider other children.
- 11) The staff should meet with the potential adoptive family within fifteen working days following the scheduled review panel conference to present on paper and verbally the child to the family.
 - a. The staff should invite involved staff and community professionals to the meeting as determined appropriate by the CFSA.
 - b. The meeting should involve a review and discussion regarding:
 - i. child's history;
 - ii. child's assessment;
 - iii. child's attachment to the child's sibling group (when one exists);
 - iv. child's recent photographs, video tape (when available);
 - v. family's level of interest and short/long-term commitment to the child;
 - vi. family's plan to provide for the child's needs;
 - vii. potential future challenges and services needed for the child and the family ;
 - viii. plan to access needed community resources;
 - ix. availability of subsidies (negotiation should not occur at this time);
 - x. family's strengths and weaknesses and parenting philosophy.
 - c. When the match involves a transracial, cultural, or ethnic placement, the staff should refer to Standard 7.8, *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural, Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*.
- 12) Following the panel conference, the adoptive family should be provided full disclosure of the child's assessment information packet.
- 13) The adoption worker should request the family make a decision in no less than 24 hours and no more than five working days following full disclosure.
- 14) When the family indicates a desire to adopt the child, the CFSA should initiate the pre-placement visitation process (see Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Homes*).
- 15) The adoption worker should have a discussion with the family upon the family's decision to adopt the child to ask if the family would want to be given the option of adopting additional children born to the child's biological parents.
- 16) The CFSA should document the adoptive family's interest in caring for siblings of their adopted child that may come into custody.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.6, *Matching* are those estimated in the Standards within Ongoing Protective Services and Administration mentioned.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.7 FOSTER PARENT ADOPTIONS

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoptive Services); S14.3 (Services for the Child); S21 (Foster and Kinship Care Services) and S21.9 (Caregiver Education) link to and support Standard 7.7 *Foster Parent Adoptions*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-48-11 (Approval of a Foster Home for Adoptive Placement) and 5101:2-48-11.1 (Foster Caregiver Adoption of a Foster Child who has Resided with the Caregiver for at Least 12 Months) address Standard 7.7 *Foster Parent Adoptions*.

*The current requirements for foster parents and adoptive parents differ, but dual license would require the same requirements.

I. Philosophy

CFASAs value foster parent adoptions, as it is in the best interest of children who are in need of an out-of-home placement to be effectively matched at time of placement, and for the child to experience only one placement. Foster parent adoptions occur when foster families are willing to adopt children who are currently placed in their home. Since permanency, continuity, and timeliness are paramount for all children in out-of-home care, requirements and supports should be consistent for both foster care and adoption so as to encourage and expedite foster parent adoptions.

II. Outcome

Children experience one out-of-home placement that provides permanency when reunification is no longer viable.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of families that are dually licensed to foster and adopt;
- number of foster families that adopt;
- number of children adopted by foster families per year versus by other families;
- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization by the foster family compared to median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization by other families;
- number of adoption disruptions in foster parent adoptive homes versus other adoptive homes.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) In order to expedite foster parent adoptions and encourage continuity and permanency of the placement:
 - a. CFSA should dually license all interested applicants and converse with the applicants regarding their interest to foster as well as adopt;
 - b. Children should be placed into an out-of-home placement that is identified as the most appropriate home that can meet their needs and be willing to provide permanency (see Standard 6.1, *Placement of Children in Out-of-Home Care* and Standard 7.6, *Matching*);
 - c. Foster families should take part in the permanency plan for children by supporting concurrent planning, which includes reunification or adoption (see Standard 3.15, *Concurrent Planning*);
 - d. CFSA should provide services, as well as refer and/or educate families regarding community resources and supports to assist in maintaining the adoption (for financial supports see Standard 7.14, *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*);
 - e. CFSA should actively recruit families who are interested in being dually licensed and approved for foster care and adoption (see Standard 7.3, *Recruitment of Adoption Homes*).

V. Financial Implications

There are no additional costs anticipated with the implementation of Standard 7.7, *Foster Parent Adoptions*, other than those identified in Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.8 SUPPORTS FOR MULTI-RACIAL, MULTI-CULTURAL, and MULTI-ETHNIC ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoptive Services) and S14.9 (Pre- and Post-Legal Adoption) link to and support Standard 7.8 *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural, and Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-42-67 (Preparation of Lifebook); 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Recruitment Plan); 5101:2-48-08 (Adoption Inquiry); 5101:2-48-13 (Adoption Requirements Pursuant to the Multiethnic Placement Act); and 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement) address Standard 7.8 *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*.

I. Philosophy

Agencies need to recognize that adoptive placements may reflect some racial, cultural or ethnic disparity between the child and adoptive family. Until there is an adequate resource pool of adoptive families that reflect the waiting children's races, cultures and ethnicities, multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic placements will occur (see Standard 7.3, *Recruitment of Adoptive Homes* and Standard 7.6, *Matching*). When these placements are made, CFSA's should make every effort to prepare and support multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic adoptive families to ensure permanency for children.

Race, culture and ethnicity are vital to the child's identity and development, and therefore, should be primary considerations in building a family through adoption from training preparation to matching to post-adoptive supports.

By supporting and educating multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-ethnic adoptive families, children are able to preserve their cultural background.

II. Outcome

All children will develop and preserve a positive racial, cultural and ethnic identity.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- number of children placed and adopted in a home of a different race, culture and/or ethnicity versus number of children placed and adopted in a home of the same race, culture and/or ethnicity;

- number of adoption disruptions in an adoptive home of a different race, culture and/or ethnicity versus number of adoption disruptions in an adoptive home of the same race, culture and/or ethnicity;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization;
- number of pre-placement activities and visits held per child and prospective adoptive family.

IV. Standards for Implementation

As part of adoption policy, the CFSA should address the placement of children in families with a different race, culture, or ethnicity than that of the child.

The CFSA should use an assessment process to determine the appropriateness of the potential match (see Standard 7.6, *Matching*).

- 1) When a decision has been made to place a child within a family of a different race, culture, or ethnicity than that of the child, the CFSA has a responsibility to provide the prospective family with information and support to raise that child. This information and support should include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. acceptance of racial, cultural, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic differences among people and a willingness to teach the child to appreciate the richness of these differences;
 - b. knowledge of how to build a lifestyle that is racially, culturally, and ethnically integrated and the skills and resources to provide a concise plan for providing an integrated lifestyle for the child;
 - c. information about the importance of living in an integrated community, whenever possible, to provide opportunities for the child to interact with children and adults of like racial, cultural and ethnic groups;
 - d. emphasis on the need for a family to develop relationships with adults and children of the same race as the child, who are able and willing to provide continuous support to the child and/or family;
 - e. understanding of their own personal history and how this helped shape their current values and attitudes regarding race, culture, ethnicity, socioeconomic, and religious differences;
 - f. acceptance of the child as a part of a racial, cultural or ethnic group that is different from their own without making the child feel separate and different;
 - g. an emphasis on the need for a family to be knowledgeable regarding the child's race, culture and ethnic ancestry and the skills to share this knowledge and information regularly with the child through family life experiences;
 - h. understanding of the impact of racism and prejudice on an individual, and a commitment to provide an opportunity to teach the child survival and coping skills;
 - i. awareness that they may need to withstand hostility and isolation when parenting a child of a race, culture or ethnicity different from their own;
 - j. understanding of the need for extended family and other significant relationships to be supportive of the family's decision to parent trans-racially, trans-culturally, or trans-ethnically, and a willingness to assist others in dealing with any prejudice and/or discrimination they may face;
 - k. willingness to provide opportunities to have regular contact with siblings and other members of the birth family when deemed appropriate (see Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children In the Adoptive Home*); and
 - l. acknowledgment and understanding of the differences in the child's skin, hair, and health care needs, and a willingness to seek support or professional assistance when needed.

- 2) Because the group process as part of this training experience is valuable, smaller agencies should work jointly to provide group training on preparation for the placement and continuous support and information.
- 3) CFSAAs should make all efforts to recruit, train and maintain staff that are culturally diverse and sensitive to differences.

V. Financial Implications

No additional costs are anticipated for Standard 7.8, *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.9 LEGAL RISK PLACEMENTS

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.2 (Administrative Practices) link to and support Standard 7.9 *Legal Risk Placements*.

Administrative Code

There are no Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 7.9 *Legal Risk Placements*.

I. Philosophy

CFSA's believe that when it has been determined that the best interest of children will be served through an adoptive placement, that a determination to terminate parental custody is likely and obtainable, and an adoptive placement has been identified, a legal risk placement is made. Legal Risk placements are carefully considered to ensure, as best as possible, that once children are placed, they will not have to experience subsequent moves. Purposeful permanency placement planning supports the needs of children to have secure attachments, stability, and continuity of care. The CFSA aspires to one placement per child.

Legal Risk Placements are considered when:

- exhaustive kinship search has been conducted, documented and no appropriate kinship placements have been identified;
- children under the temporary custody of the CFSA have been placed in a home that has been certified as a foster family home and approved as an adoptive home; and
- where the CFSA anticipates permanent custody of the children will be granted or where permanent custody of the children has been granted, but the permanent custody decision is under appeal and it is anticipated the children will be adopted by the family following the finalization of permanent custody.

II. Outcome

Children experience one out-of-home placement that can provide permanency when termination of parental rights is sought and secured.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of families that are dually licensed to foster and adopt and willing to foster in a legal risk situation;
- number of foster families that foster in a legal risk situation;
- number of children adopted by foster families per year versus by other families;

- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- median length of stay in a legal risk situation prior to adoption finalization.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) When a foster family contacts the CFSA wanting to adopt and is willing to foster in a legal risk situation, the family's file should note this willingness as part of the certification and approval process (see Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*).
- 2) When a child enters out-of-home care and it is anticipated that permanent custody will be sought by the CFSA, staff should meet to plan for, and identify, a placement that is a potential permanent placement resource.
- 3) Upon identification of the permanent placement resource, staff should contact the foster caregiver(s) to discuss the placement of the child in the home as a legal risk placement.
- 4) Staff assigned to the child's case should follow Standard 7.5, *Preparing Children for Adoption*.
- 5) When the foster caregiver(s) agrees to the legal risk placement, the foster caregiver(s) and the CFSA should enter into a letter of understanding which outlines the roles and responsibilities of each in regards to legal risk placement. In addition to outlining the roles and responsibilities of the CFSA and legal risk foster home, the letter of agreement should contain statements regarding the following:
 - a. tentativeness of the permanent custody with acknowledgment that the final decision rests with the court;
 - b. intention of the CFSA to make the placement in the home permanent;
 - c. understanding that, until all rights of the birth parents are terminated and all appeals exhausted, the foster parents understand that the child's placement in the home is a "legal risk" placement;
 - d. rights and responsibilities for making the decision rest solely with the agency or court;
 - e. letter of agreement should include signature lines for the agency representative, foster caregiver(s) and witness; and
 - f. identification of the child's current legal status.
- 6) Caregivers should receive additional support from the CFSA before, during, and following any removal from the home and processing the family's grief and loss.

V. Financial Implications

No additional costs are estimated for the implementation of Standard 7.9, *Legal Risk Placements*.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.10 INTERAGENCY ADOPTIVE PLACEMENTS

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoptive Services); S14.2 (Administrative Practices); and S15 (Inter-County Adoption Services) link to and support Standard 7.10 *Interagency Adoptive Placements*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-39-50 (Cooperation with Other Organizations to Coordinate Service Delivery to Children and Families); 5101:2-42-20 (General Requirements Applicable to Interstate Placements of Children Into or From Ohio); 5101:2-42-21 (Agency and Court Interstate Placement Requirements); 5101:2-42-22 (Independent Interstate Requirements); 5101:2-42-23 (Requirements Applicable to Placements of Foreign-Born Children into Ohio for the Purpose of Adoption); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Agency Agreements); 5101:2-48-05 (Agency Adoption Policy and Agency Recruitment Plan); 5101:2-48-06 (Adoption Agency Staffing); 5101:2-48-13 (Adoption Requirements Pursuant to the Multiethnic Placement Act); 5101:2-48-14 (Preparation of Child for Adoptive Placement); 5101:2-48-16 (Adoptive Placement Procedures); and 5101:2-48-17 (Prefinalization Services) address Standard 7.10 *Interagency Adoptive Placements*.

I. Philosophy

For children to be placed in a timely manner with a family that best meets their needs, all available adoptive resources should be considered. All children deserve a permanent, stable home in which to grow. In order to accomplish this, it is vital for agencies to cooperate with one another by sharing adoptive services and supports offered to families. Interagency adoptions must be addressed in a uniform and consistent manner throughout the state.

II. Outcome

All children will have a permanent, safe home.

Agencies collaborate and share adoptive resources.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- documentation that a formal agreement was established to identify the role of both agencies with regards to matching, pre-placement activities, placement activities, post-placement supervisions, finalization and post-finalization services;

- number of concurrent plans developed at point of entry and modified throughout that identifies possible adoptive matches for the child;
- number of aggressive recruitment plans developed within seven days of receiving permanent custody of children;
- number of pre-placement activities and visits held per child and prospective adoptive family;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization;
- number of adoption disruptions through interagency adoptive placements versus child custodial adoptive placements.

IV. Standards for Implementation

Agencies should develop and enter into a formal agreement that identifies who will be responsible for each service provided to the family and children. These services include, but not limited to: Matching Process; Pre-Placement Activities; Placement Activities and Post-Placement Supervision; and Finalization and Post-Finalization Services.

A. Matching Process

- 1) CFSAs should meet face-to-face to assess the potential adoptive family's ability to meet the needs of the waiting child (see Standard 7.6, *Matching*). This conference may be conducted by telephone when distance is a prohibiting factor.
- 2) It should be the responsibility of the custodial CFSA to arrange and facilitate the matching process (see Standard 7.6, *Matching*, for more information regarding identification of family, staffing and determination).
- 3) The responsibilities of each agency within the matching process should be clearly determined and agreed upon in writing.

B. Pre-Placement Activities

- 1) Visitation
 - a. The CFSAs should collaborate on behalf of the child, adoptive family and foster family to create a written pre-placement visitation schedule, specifying the location of each visit, parties responsible for transportation, and length of each visit.
 - b. The visitation plan should focus on the child's needs and who is responsible for supervision of the visitation (see Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home*).
 - c. This plan may need to be modified. When this is necessary, the child, each agency, the adoptive family and foster family (if applicable) should participate.
- 2) Subsidy
 - a. The subsidy package should be discussed and agreed upon by all (see Standard 7.14, *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*).
 - b. The subsidy package should include adoption services and supports beyond just financial.
- 3) Formal Interagency Agreement
 - a. Agencies should sign a formal agreement regarding the responsibilities of each agency.

- b. These responsibilities should include, but not be limited to:
 - i. post-placement supervision;
 - ii. monthly reports from the supervising agency, including dates of contact, adjustment of child and family, identified needs of child and family, follow-up to needs, any other recommendations;
 - iii. billing procedures (if needed);
 - iv. referrals to appropriate community resources;
 - v. finalization services to be provided, including court location and agency completing pre-finalization report and other court documents; and
 - vi. post-finalization services.

C. Placement Activities and Post-Placement Supervision

- 1) Placement Activities
 - a. The CFSA's should be present at the signing of the adoption placement agreement and other related documents.
 - b. The family should have a copy of the formal interagency agreement, which includes the roles and responsibilities of each agency.
 - c. The CFSA should refer to Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home*, for further placement activities.
- 2) Post-Placement Supervision
 - a. The supervising agency should be responsible for visits with the child and family until finalization. Frequency and number of visits should be determined by the needs of the child and family.
 - b. The CFSA should refer to Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home*, for further post-placement activities.

D. Finalization and Post-Finalization Services

- 1) All parties should be in agreement as to when finalization should occur.
- 2) The agency identified in the formal interagency agreement should provide the finalization and post-finalization services.
- 3) The supervising agency should prepare the child and family for finalization. Refer to Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home* for further post-placement activities and Standard 7.12, *Post-Adoption Services*.
- 4) An opportunity should be provided to all agencies to reflect on and strengthen the interagency experience through reviewing the following:
 - i. implementation of the interagency process;
 - ii. identification of administrative "glitches", miscommunication;
 - iii. identification of procedures and practices for resolution of problem areas.

V. Financial Implications

No additional costs have been estimated for the implementation of Standard 7.10, *Interagency Adoptive Placements* other than those identified in Standards 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*, 7.6 *Matching*, and 7.11, *Placement of Children in the Adoptive Home*.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.11 PLACEMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE ADOPTIVE HOME

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.3 (Services to the Child) link to and support Standard 7.11 *Placement of Children in the Adoptive Home*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-39-06 (Preplacement Preventative Services, Reunification Services and Life Skill Services); 5101:2-39-07 (Supportive Services); 5101:2-42-05 (Selection of a Placement Setting); 5101:2-42-651 (Pre-Finalization Services); 5101:2-48-12 Adoption Placement Requirements); 5101:2-48-13 (Adoptive Placement Requirements Pursuant to the Multiethnic Placement Act); 5101:2-48-16 (Adoptive Placement Procedures); 5101:2-48-17 (Pre-Finalization Services) address Standard 7.11 *Placement of Children in the Adoptive Home*.

I. Philosophy

CFASAs recognize the placement of children in the adoptive home as a pivotal point in the adoption experience. For adoptive parents, this includes new responsibilities of parenting, protection and care of the child. For the child, this includes separation and loss, as well as adjustment to a new environment, home and family. The addition of new family members requires care and support for the family to achieve balance and stability. Therefore, varying levels of support are necessary throughout the adoption process to meet the individual needs of the family and child.

CFASAs, in support of the stabilization and maintenance of the new family unit, should provide pre-placement opportunities and post-placement involvement. CFASAs must provide or link the family to service supports to assure the family's successful efforts at permanency beyond finalization. CFSA's case management activities provide additional support for the family as it strives to redefine itself.

II. Outcome

Children, along with their adoptive family, are supported and educated throughout the adoption process.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of children in permanent custody per year;
- documentation that all children in permanent custody have had an opportunity to discuss feelings about adoption, input about permanency plan and identifying potential relationships to maintain;

- number of good-bye visits held by the agency with the child and child's family within ninety days of obtaining permanent custody;
- number of pre-placement activities and visits held per child and prospective adoptive family;
- number of children with adoption finalizations per year;
- median length of stay in permanent custody prior to adoption finalization;
- number of weekly visits made by agency staff during first month of placement in the adoptive home;
- documentation that post-finalization services were offered and available to adoptive families;
- number of adoptions that disrupt per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Pre-Placement Activities

- 1) Prior to the placement of the child in the adoptive home, the CFSA, adoptive family, and child (when age and developmentally appropriate) should meet to:
 - a. discuss the child's strengths, interests, specific care and needs with the family explicitly, acknowledge and discuss with the family the pivotal and, at times, difficult nature of the transition for the child (see Standard 7.5, *Preparing Children for Adoption* and 7.6, *Matching*);
 - b. establish pre-placement activities and visitation plan that can help minimize the stress and/or trauma to the child, adoptive family and foster family;
 - c. identify and ensure needed services and supports are accessible for the family and child; and
 - d. develop the Adoption Placement Agreement, which identifies and commits all parties to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.

- 2) Pre-placement visits aid in lessening the degree of stress and trauma experienced by child and family, which may occur during a placement transition. These activities should also give the child a sense of control, assist the child in understanding the process, ease the child's and family's adjustment, and facilitate new attachments. The Pre-Placement Visitation Plan should be written, shared and agreed upon by all parties. The plan should include the following activities to assure successful transition.
 - a. A pre-placement visitation plan that identifies the frequency, duration and location of visits based on the child's needs.

The initial visit,

 - i. should occur where the child is most comfortable with the worker, foster family (if applicable) and/or other significant persons;
 - ii. should be short, keeping in mind the child's schedule and if possible, no more than two to four hours.

Further visits,

 - iii. should progress steadily from day long visits (if distance allows) to overnights, weekend, weeks and more extended periods (visits should not be less than four weeks and not more than six weeks);
 - iv. should allow breaks between visits to allow time for the child to process the transition in which the worker explores the child's feelings and thoughts regarding the visits and the adoptive family;
 - v. include staff to review feedback received from the foster family regarding the child's and the adoptive family's response to scheduled visitation;

- vi. may be less or more than the specified timeframe based on the child's circumstances and developmental needs.
 - b. Assurance that the foster family has educated the adoptive family about the child's routine and the adoptive family has experienced the routine;
 - c. Assurance that the transition of parental responsibilities (including school placement, counseling, medical information, etc.) to the adoptive family;
 - d. Establishment of the approximate adoptive placement date. While a date is identified, both the adoptive family and CFSA should remain flexible, adjusting the time frame to meet the needs of the child and the adoptive family.
- 3) The Adoption Agreement should include, but not be limited to, the following:
- a. acceptance of the child in the home;
 - b. acknowledgment of the adoption as a legal process requiring court action;
 - c. acknowledgment of the CFSA as the legal custodian and supervisor of the placement until finalization;
 - d. willingness of the adoptive family to provide daily care to the child as necessary to meet the child's needs;
 - e. assumption of financial responsibility for the child (with CFSA support where indicated);
 - f. willingness to notify the CFSA within 24 hours of serious illness or injury;
 - g. agreement to defer additional foster care or adoptive activities prior to finalization without the written consent of the CFSA;
 - h. agreement to notify the CFSA when taking the child out of state for a period of five or more days;
 - i. acknowledgment of the adoptive family's right to apply for subsidies;
 - j. agreement to honor the child's visitation plan;
 - k. inclusion of appropriate support services;
 - l. acknowledgment that the adoptive family is making a lifetime commitment to the child as a member of the family unit;
 - m. acknowledgment that the Adoption Agreement may be amended, with both signatures, when additional needs are identified; and
 - n. signatures of the CFSA, the supervising agency and adoptive caregiver(s), and date the Agreement was entered into.

B. Placement/Pre-Finalization Activities

- 1) The child and family's identified needs and adjustment should be the primary focus of each agency's visit. The worker should explore the child's and family's feelings and thoughts regarding the adoptive placement.
- 2) The worker should make monthly collateral contact with each service provider and receive written reports to monitor transition.
- 3) Pre-finalization visits should be used to assist the adoptive family in moving through the stages of adjustment to finalization.
- 4) The worker and adoptive family should discuss the finalization procedures and mutually agree on when finalization should occur.
- 5) Prior to the legal finalization of the adoption, the staff should offer post finalization services to the adoptive family (see Standard 8.12, *Post Finalization Services*) and should work with the family to put identified services in place.

V. Financial Implications

Additional costs associated with Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in the Adoptive Home* are dependent, and will vary, based on the services needed to support the child and adoptive family to maintain the adoptive placement.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE
STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.12 POST ADOPTION SERVICES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.9 (Pre- and Post-Legal Adoption Services) link to and support Standard 7.12 *Post Adoption Services*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-39-07 (Supportive Services); 5101:2-44-071 (Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy); 5101:2-48-01 (AdoptOhio Agency Responsibilities); 5101:2-48-03 (Requirements of ODJFS 1616 "Social and Medical History"); 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Agency Agreements); 5101:2-48-07 (Listing and Withdrawing Children and Families with the "Ohio Adoption Photo Listing" (OAPL) and the AdoptOhio Photo Listing Web Page); 5101:2-48-08 (Redetermination of State Adoption Subsidy); 5101:2-48-15 (Provision of Information to the Adoptive Family); 5101:2-48-18 (Postfinalization Services); and 5101:2-48-20 (Release of Identifying and Nonidentifying Information) address Standard 7.12 *Post Adoption Services*

I. Philosophy

Post adoption services should support all adoption triad members (birth families, adoptive families and adult adopted persons) and assist all members in resolution of adoption issues and accessing community services. Post adoption services should be family/person initiated and driven. When community services are lacking, CFSAs must advocate for community-based specialized adoption counseling and support services.

Birth families should feel supported in their adoption decision and be encouraged to reconnect with the CFSA when further services are needed. CFSAs should be sensitive to the grief/loss and search needs of all birth families, irrespective of how parental rights were terminated.

CFSAs and the community should support adoptive families' adjustments and if needed, assist in preserving their family.

CFSAs should be sensitive to the grief/loss and search needs of all adopted persons irrespective of the age of the child at the time of adoption.

II. Outcome

All adoption triad members are supported in healthy resolution of adoption issues. Adoptive families maintain permanency.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of children adopted per year;

- documentation that post-finalization services were offered and made available to adoptive families, birth families and adult adopted persons;
- number of weekly visits made by agency staff during first month of placement in the adoptive home;
- number of post-finalization services utilized by adoptive families;
- number of post-finalization services utilized by birth families;
- number of post-finalization services utilized by adult adopted persons;
- number of adoptions that disrupt per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Birth Families

- 1) Services to birth families should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. counseling and support services;
 - b. information and referral;
 - c. openness issues;
 - d. intermediary services;
 - e. updating medical and social history; and
 - f. search services.

B. Adoptive Families

CFSA should service any adoptive family residing in their county, regardless of how the adoption occurred.

- 1) Prior to finalization, staff should meet with the adoptive family to discuss the community services that are available including, but not be limited to:
 - a. counseling;
 - b. respite;
 - c. adoption sensitive community services;
 - d. ongoing training on adoption issues;
 - e. advocacy with community service providers;
 - f. crisis intervention;
 - g. subsidy (see Standard 7.14, *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*);
 - h. updating medical and social history;
 - i. information and referral; and
 - j. search issues.
- 2) Upon request, families should be extended lifelong post adoptive services. The post adoptive worker should serve as a facilitator to link the family with the appropriate service(s).
- 3) If adoptive families enter the CFSA's system through another avenue of services, such as intake or ongoing protective services, the post adoption worker should assist with the case.

C. Adult Adopted Persons

- 1) Services that may be available to the adult adopted person include, but not be limited to:
 - a. counseling;
 - b. adoption sensitive community services;

- c. crisis intervention;
- d. updated medical and social history;
- e. non-identifying information;
- f. information and referral;
- g. referral to adoption triad groups; and
- h. search issues.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.12, *Post Adoption Services* are dependent on the services identified as needed to maintain the child in the adoptive placement and to support the adoptive parents, family unit and adult adopted person.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.13 ADOPTIVE PARENT TRAINING

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services); S14.7 (Services for Adoptive Applicants and Adoptive Services); and S14.9 (Pre- and Post-Legal Adoption Services) link to and support Standard 7.13 *Adoptive Parent Training*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-48-04 (AdoptOhio Agency Responsibilities) and 5101:2-48-09 (Recruitment Programs and Education Training) address Standard 7.13 *Adoptive Parent Training*.

I. Philosophy

Joint pre-service training to foster/adoptive applicants should be offered by CFSA, since foster parent adoptions are at least 70% of agencies' adoptions. The decision to become a foster/adoptive family requires information, knowledge, and introspection. CFSA must assure, to the best of their ability, that the foster/adoptive applicant is well-prepared to make a lifelong commitment. Applicants should be encouraged to seriously consider the lifelong impact of foster/adoption on their family.

Pre-service training provides foster/adoptive applicants with an opportunity to explore their personal feelings regarding adoption, gain valuable information, and acquire the knowledge needed to make an informed decision as to whether fostering and/or adopting is right for their family.

In an effort to provide the best possible supportive services to an adoptive family after placement, the CFSA should offer ongoing training on adoption issues to the adoptive family after adoptive placement and prior to finalization (for post-finalization training, see Standard 7.12, *Post Adoption Services*). Pre-finalization training responds to the unique challenges facing each family and the common experiences all adoptive families face.

II. Outcome

Families will have access to ongoing training that will support and educate them regarding adoption related issues and parenting.

Adoptive families maintain permanency.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of adoptive families that complete pre-service training for foster/adoptive applicants;
- number of families that participate in pre-finalization trainings (at minimum three trainings);
- number of adoptive families participating in support groups made available by CFSA;
- number of post-finalization services utilized by adoptive family;
- number of adoptions per year;
- number of adoptions that disrupt per year.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Pre-Service Training

- 1) Refer to Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families, Section H, Training* for standards regarding pre-serving training for foster/adoptive applicants.

B. Pre-Finalization Training

- 1) The CFSA should assess the family's strengths and determine training needs of the family to increase their knowledge of adoption issues, which is more meaningful with an adoptive child in their home. The CFSA should make available to each family a minimum of three trainings on adoption issues. The training should be educational for families and relate information to the needs of the adoptive families. When feasible, the CFSA should coordinate training with other agencies to maximize resources and encourage adoptive families to make connections with one another.
- 2) The pre-finalization training opportunities should include, but not be limited to:
 - a. adjustments for parents and child in transition from fostering to adopting;
 - b. adoption myths;
 - c. information regarding child abuse and neglect;
 - d. examination of applicant's personal attitudes, feelings regarding adoption, and general issues facing all adopters/adoptees;
 - e. parenting of the physically or sexually abused child;
 - f. adoptive child's specific special circumstances or needs;
 - g. use of behavior management and discipline techniques and effective parenting styles;
 - h. reactive attachment disorder and attention deficit disorder;
 - i. issues of separation and loss, attachment;
 - j. how to discuss adoption with your adopted child (including searching for the child's birth family, sibling contact, and birth family involvement, based on child's familial history);
 - k. how to create the family's adoption story to share with other family members and community;
 - l. tools and resources available to help stabilize families;
 - m. transcultural reality of all adoption and it's impact on the child and family (see Standard 7.8, *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families*);
 - n. impact of adoption on children at various developmental stages;
 - o. predictable stages of adoptive family development;
 - p. open adoption;
 - q. triggers for adoptive parents and child; and

r. infertility and the "dream" child.

- 3) The CFSA should make adoptive parent/family support group information available to the applicant prior to placement and highly recommended after placement of a child in the home.

C. Post-Finalization Training

- 1) The CFSA should review Standard 7.12, *Post-Adoption Services*, regarding the provision of training and/or services once the adoption has been finalized.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with *Standard 7.13, Adoptive Parent Training* would include recruitment and pre-adoption training for a total of:

6 hours x \$89.25 = \$535.50 per training session

Plus additional costs for other services (i.e., Post-Finalization Training) are dependent and will vary, based on the services needed to support the child and adoptive family to maintain the adoptive placement.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.14 FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.7 (Services for Adoptive Applicants and Adoptive Parents) link to and support Standard 7.14 *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rules 5101:2-44-02 (Purpose of State Adoption Subsidy Program); 5101:2-44-03 (Public Children Services Agency Administration of State Adoption Subsidy Program); 5101:2-44-04 (Application for State Adoption Subsidy); 5101:2-44-05 (Eligibility of Child for the State Adoption Subsidy Program); 5101:2-44-051 (ADC-Related Medicaid Eligibility for Special Needs Children who are Receiving a State Adoption Subsidy); 5101:2-44-052 (ADC-Related Medicaid Eligibility for State Adoption Subsidy Recipient Moving to or from Ohio); 5101:2-44-06 (Eligibility of Adoptive Parent for the State Adoption Subsidy Program); 5101:2-44-07 (Decision Regarding Application for State Adoption Subsidy); 5101:2-44-071 (Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy); 5101:2-44-08 (Redetermination of a State Adoption Subsidy); 5101:2-47-28 (Adoption Assistance Eligibility Procedure: Application Process for Adoption Assistance); 5101:2-47-29 (Adoption Assistance Program Eligibility: Eligibility Requirements); 5101:2-47-30 (Adoption Assistance Program Eligibility: Special Needs); 5101:2-47-33 (Adoption Assistance Program Eligibility: Age Requirement); 5101:2-47-34 (Adoption Assistance Program Eligibility: Determination of Continuing Eligibility Requirements); 5101:2-47-35 (Adoption Assistance Eligibility Procedure: Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Post-Finalization Application); 5101:2-47-36 (Adoption Assistance Payment Eligibility: Adoption Assistance Agreement and Duration: Provision for Financial Support and Services); 5101:2-47-38 (Adoption Assistance Payment Eligibility: Modification/Amendment of Adoption Assistance Agreement); 5101:2-47-42 (Adoption Assistance Payment Rate: Determination of the Payment Amount); 5101:2-47-43 (Adoption Assistance Payment Rate: Payment Rate for Adoption Assistance) and 5101:2-47-44 (Adoption Assistance: Reimbursement of Nonrecurring Adoption Expenses for a Child with Special Needs) address Standard 7.14 *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*.

I. Philosophy

Financial supports should not supplant parental financial responsibility and entitlement for caring for the adopted child, but should assist the family in providing for the special needs of the child. The financial supports provided by CFSAs should include, but not be limited to, federal and state adoption assistance programs.

II. Outcome

A child's placement with an approved family is not delayed or prevented due to financial considerations.

Financial supports are available for families adopting children with special needs.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- documentation that all adoptive families were made aware of available adoption subsidies;
- documentation that all adoptive families received a list of community resources and services that could assist them;
- documentation that financial adoption supports are made available and reviewed annually.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Provision of Financial Supports

- 1) The CFSA should inform all adoptive families as to a child's eligibility for subsidy and the availability of adoption subsidies, adoption assistance, and post-adoption subsidies.
- 2) For children in the permanent custody of the CFSA, the adoptive family, in cooperation with the CFSA, should examine current special needs of the child and the financial supports needed prior to placement of the child in the home. This assessment of the child's special needs should be reviewed and modified if necessary, prior to finalization.
- 3) For children not in the permanent custody of the CFSA, the county of residence's CFSA, with the adoptive family, should examine the current special needs of the child and financial supports needed.
- 4) CFSA should distribute a list of community resources and services that could meet the needs of the child to the adoptive family, which could be accessed by the family in the future as needed.
- 5) For children who are not currently demonstrating special needs, but are at-risk of developing particular special needs, the CFSA may elect to provide program eligibility for future financial assistance. This eligibility should be reviewed by the CFSA and family on an annual basis to assess the current need of the child.
- 6) If a child has identified special needs and the family elects to not apply for federal and state adoption subsidies, the CFSA should document the refusal for financial supports.
- 7) Financial adoption supports should be made available and reviewed annually until such time the child is no longer in need of the provided service(s), or up until the time the child reaches 18 years or 21 years as defined in the Ohio Revised Code, Chapters 5153.01 and 5153.02.
- 8) CFSA should develop an agency adoption subsidy policy regarding required documentation when adoptive families request elevated adoption subsidies greater than the federal portion of the subsidies.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 7.14, *Financial Supports for Adoptive Families*, including providing and monitoring an individualized adoption subsidy program for each family, are estimated as follows:

- a. cost of subsidies is borne in general, by state and federal governments;
- b. costs associated with Adoption Services are included in Standards 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families* through 7.13, *Adoptive Parent Training*.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.15 OPENNESS IN ADOPTION

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.4 (Openness in Adoption) link to and support Standard 7.15 *Openness in Adoption*.

Administrative Code

There are no Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 7.15 *Openness in Adoption*.

I. Philosophy

Openness in adoption allows the child to maintain a connection to his/her birth family thus potentially lessening the child's feelings of abandonment, aiding in the child's identity formation and decreasing divided loyalties. There is a whole openness continuum, from sharing information between the birth and adoptive families through an intermediary, to the birth and adoptive families having regular ongoing visits. The level of openness is based on the agency's assessment, and the comfort level among the triad members. The openness agreement can be adapted, based upon the changing needs of the adoption triad, and should always be in the best interest of the child.

Kinship adoption should be provided the same opportunities for information and support in relationship to openness as other adoptions, with particular sensitivity to the unique strengths and stresses of in-family adoptions.

II. Outcome

Child develops an integrated positive identity through connections with birth and adoptive family.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of adoptions per year;
- number of open adoptions per year;
- number of open adoptions that disrupt per year versus "closed" adoption disruptions per year;
- median length of stay between permanent custody and adoption finalizations for open adoptions versus "closed" adoption.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) CFSA's will assist the adoptive family and the birth family to help them determine the level of openness desired. Initially, the CFSA may need to facilitate this conversation. Such assessment for openness include, but not be limited to:
 - a. safety level, including severity of abuse/neglect, mental stability, violence, respecting boundaries, etc;
 - b. comfort level of all parties involved;
 - c. level, frequency and appropriateness of previous contact with birth family and child;
 - d. level of healthy attachment to birth family (and adoptive family, if applicable);
 - e. roles defined and boundaries established; and
 - f. geographic proximity between the birth and adoptive family.
- 2) Based on the assessment, the degree of openness is decided by the adoptive family with the input of the birth family. The CFSA may want to facilitate this conversation (if meeting jointly).
- 3) It should be emphasized that the openness agreement is not enforceable by Ohio law, but that it is more of a moral commitment.
- 4) Over time, each adoptive family can modify the appropriate openness level based on changing needs of child, adoptive family and birth family.
- 5) The CFSA should provide the adoptive family with support, training opportunities and information on open adoption (see Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families* and 7.13, *Adoptive Parent Training*).

V. Financial Implications

There are no additional costs anticipated with the implementation of Standard 7.15, *Openness in Adoption*, other than those identified in Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families* and Standard 7.13, *Adoptive Parent Training*.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR ADOPTION SERVICES

7.16 ADOPTION SERVICES FOR NONTRADITIONAL ADOPTION FAMILIES

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S14 (Adoption Services) and S14.3 (Services for the Child) link to and support Standard 7.16 *Adoption Services for Nontraditional Adoption Families*.

Administrative Standards

There are no Administrative Code Rules that directly address Standard 7.16 *Adoption Services for Nontraditional Adoption Families*.

I. Philosophy

Everyone with the potential to successfully parent a child in foster care or adoption is entitled to fair and equal consideration regardless of family structure, age, socio-economic status, physical or mental challenges, and/or sexual orientation. CFSAs should assess each applicant from the perspective of what would be in the best interest of the child. Staff and board training on cultural diversity should include factual information about nontraditional families as potential adoptive resources for children needing families in order to dispel common myths. The needs of the child are the priority consideration in adoption.

II. Outcome

Children reach permanency through adoption by considering all potential resources of adoptive families.

III. Evaluation

FACSIS events, CPOE and the Federal Health and Human Services outcomes may be considered when evaluating this standard. In addition, the CFSA may consider the following:

- number of nontraditional prospective applicants per year;
- number of nontraditional prospective applicants qualifying per year;
- number of nontraditional prospective applicants completing all necessary paperwork per year;
- number of nontraditional prospective applicants completing all training requirements per year;
- number of nontraditional prospective applicants approved per year;
- number of nontraditional adoptive families that complete pre-service training for foster/adoptive applicants;
- number of nontraditional families that participate in pre-finalization trainings (at minimum three trainings);
- number of nontraditional adoptive families participating in support groups made available by CFSA.

IV. Standards for Implementation

A. Recruitment

- 1) Standard 7.3, *Recruitment of Adoptive Homes*, should be utilized to find permanent homes for children. In addition, the following standards should be applied to promote the recruitment of families for all Ohio's waiting children:
 - a. CFSAs and the state agency should expand adoption recruitment efforts to include nontraditional families.
 - b. CFSAs should participate in ongoing media recruitment activities within nontraditional communities.
 - c. CFSAs should make every effort to modify recruitment activities and promotions to be inclusive and welcoming to all potential foster/adoptive applicants.

B. Certification/Approval Process

- 1) Standard 7.1, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*, should be utilized to find permanent homes for children. In addition, the following standards should be applied to the certification/approval process:
 - a. In considering nontraditional applicants, CFSAs should have included in the materials sent to prospective applicants, information regarding agency's policies of supporting nontraditional families and encouraging all to apply.
 - b. During the process of certification and approval, CFSAs should be flexible with the homestudy process to meet the needs of the nontraditional family.
 - c. Staff should be cognizant of any unique needs or supports families may have, and be respectful throughout the homestudy process of these needs. Questions should be altered or expanded to fit the unique needs of the family.

C. Training

- 1) In addition to the training standards in Standard 7.13, *Adoptive Parent Training*, CFSAs and the state should provide pre-service training that is inclusive and dispels myths of nontraditional families. Training curriculum should include resources available for nontraditional families both pre and post adoption.

D. Matching

- 1) Standard 7.6, *Matching*, should be utilized to find permanent homes for children. In addition, the following standards should be applied to the matching process.
 - a. To make the best possible placement for a child, CFSAs should consider all families regardless of their nontraditional or traditional status during the matching staffing.
 - b. CFSAs should develop matching guidelines to ensure inclusivity of all potential resource families. Personal values should not be an obstacle for making the best placement choice for a child.

E. Child Preparation

- 1) Standard 7.5, *Preparing Children for Adoption* and Standard 7.11, *Placement of Children in Adoptive Home*, should be referred to for preparing the child for adoption. In addition, the following standards should be applied when placing a child with a nontraditional adoptive family:
 - a. The preparation for any placement should require staff to assess the differences between the child's family, relatives and/or foster families compared to the nontraditional adoptive family and explain to the child the differences between the families.
 - b. According to the child's development level, staff should allow children to respond and share feelings, thoughts and concerns of being adopted by a nontraditional family.
 - c. In the event children do have concerns, questions or fears, staff need to prepare the child appropriately for the adoption placement. Staff should educate and try to alleviate the child's fear by having ongoing dialogue with the child's prospective family, allowing the child to spend time with the prospective family and talking with the child about his/her experiences with the pre-placement visits.
 - d. CFSAs should work to provide supportive environments during the transition that are particularly sensitive to the child's feelings and questions regarding the nontraditional status of the adoptive family. Foster and birth families should be encouraged to be supportive to the perspective family.
 - e. The child, and the birth family should have the opportunity to express their discomfort with a potential placement. CFSAs should be respectful of the child's birth, kinship and foster families discomfort with the potential family and work to alleviate or resolve issues of concern.

F. Support

- 1) Standard 7.8, *Supports for Multi-Racial, Multi-Cultural and Multi-Ethnic Adoptive Families* should be referred to for supports for families. In addition, the following standards should be applied when supporting the nontraditional family:
 - a. During the certification and approval process, CSFAs should assess the nontraditional family's support network and discuss needed or additional supports.
 - b. CFSAs should make every effort to maintain current resources to provide to nontraditional families throughout the adoption process.

G. Social Worker/Public Competency and Agency Policies

- 1) CFSAs should be responsible to train their social work staff to be aware and inclusive of all resources available to children and to understand that nontraditional families can provide an important role in providing permanency.
- 2) CFSAs should provide continuing education to social workers regarding ethical practice for social work and not to jeopardize possible adoptive placements based on personal values.
- 3) CFSAs should provide training for social workers to establish trust and openness in relationships with all applicants, including nontraditional applicants.
- 4) CFSAs should educate/advocate with court appointed personnel, administration, guardian ad litem and the general community on the importance of assessing nontraditional families as resources in meeting the needs of permanency for waiting children.

- 5) CFSAs should have policies that address the services and supports that will be offered and provided to all families, including nontraditional foster and adoptive families.
- 6) Beyond training provided, CFSAs should display and include in day-to-day operations an open and inclusive environment that facilitates mutual respect and open dialogue on issues of diversity.
- 7) A working environment where values of inclusivity are fostered will produce practice that is nondiscriminatory.
- 8) CFSAs should develop a committee to assess on an ongoing basis current policies to assure that they reflect nondiscriminatory practices to all families.
- 9) CFSAs should promote these newly modified policies with the wider public, including court appointed personnel, guardian ad litem, public and private agencies, and the general public.

V. Financial Implications

No additional costs are anticipated for Standard 7.16, *Adoption Services for Nontraditional Adoption Families*.