

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES
STANDARDS FOR EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

STANDARDS FOR OUT-OF-HOME CARE SERVICES

6.8 SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER CAREGIVERS

Council on Accreditation Standards

The Council on Accreditation Standards S21.9 (Caregiver Education); S21.11 (Human Resources); S21.12 (Human Resources: Personnel Skills); and S21.15 (Treatment Foster Parent Support) link to and support Standard 6.8 *Supports for Foster Caregivers*.

Administrative Code

The Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:2-5-13 (Required Agency Policy) addresses Standard 6.8 *Supports for Foster Caregivers*.

I. Philosophy

CFSA foster caregivers are a key resource in out-of-home care services. The complexity of the system, the unique needs of children and families, the additional responsibilities and the challenges faced by foster caregivers, increase the need for support and comprehensive training. Hence, as a valued resource, foster caregivers must be provided with individualized ongoing support, which allows for the provision of effective care to children. Effective support has been shown to retain foster families. CFSA's recognize that, without the necessary supports, foster families may burn-out, drop-out, or request that children be removed. While foster caregiver support services vary among communities, there are core support services that should be available and in place to meet the needs of all foster caregivers.

II. Outcome

Foster caregivers are retained.

Placements are successfully maintained.

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 licensed foster families;
- number of foster families that transfer per year;
- number of foster families that terminate license per year;
- number of grievances files by foster families per year;
- number of children who disrupt placement;
- average number of moves from foster homes;
- number of children reunified;
- the median length of stay for children prior to returning home, emancipation or prior to adoption finalization;
- number of children adopted by foster families.

IV. Standards for Implementation

- 1) Ongoing and regular interaction with foster caregivers is the primary mean of providing support (see Standard 6.7, *Retention and Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Caregivers*).
- 2) Supports are provided formally and informally by the agency and community. It is the agency's responsibility to assure that each foster caregiver has access to, is linked with and/or provided with, those support services that will enable them to parent effectively.
- 3) In addition to supports described in Standard 6.7, *Retention and Recruitment of Foster and Adoptive Caregivers*, the CFSA should assure foster caregivers and their families are linked to the following core support services provided in the community by the CFSA or community provider:
 - a. respite;
 - b. foster caregiver mentoring and/or peer support;
 - c. transportation;
 - d. school based activities;
 - e. day care, before and after school programs;
 - f. recreational, cultural activities;
 - g. physical, mental health services for children;
 - h. support groups for children in care;
 - i. relevant training;
 - j. legal resources; and
 - k. complaint, grievance process supports.
- 4) At the time of certification and approval, each foster caregiver should receive a foster caregiver's information packet that describes agency policies, procedures and expectations, and support services available to them, with guidelines on how to access these (see Standard 6.3, *Combined Certification and Approval for Foster Care and Adoptive Families*).
- 5) During the foster caregiver recertification process, the CFSA should elicit information regarding foster parent satisfaction with CFSA foster parent support services (see Standard 6.4, *Reevaluation of Foster Care and Adoptive Homes*).
- 6) If there is a lack of adequate resources, the CFSA should collaborate and solicit community support and providers for support services for children and foster caregivers.
- 7) When support services are inadequate and/or unavailable, the CFSA should advocate with local and state agencies, ODJFS Office for Children and Families, and state representatives for the resources and supports needed to remove barriers and close identified gaps in services.
- 8) The CFSA should develop and implement an annual plan based on identified gaps in service supports to enhance the CFSA's current level/quality of support services.

V. Financial Implications

Costs associated with Standard 6.8, *Supports for Foster Caregivers* will vary based on the discrete services offered in the areas of:

- a. respite;
- b. foster caregiver mentoring and/or peer support;
- c. transportation;
- d. school based activities;
- e. day care, before and after school programs;
- f. recreational, cultural activities;
- g. physical, mental health services for children;
- h. support groups for children in-care;
- i. relevant training;
- j. legal resources;
- k. complaint, grievance process supports.