



**FOSTER AND
ADOPTIVE
CAREGIVER
POLICY
MANUAL**



**Foster Care Policy Manual
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**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy # 1**

**Discipline and Restraint of Children in Care
5101:2-7-09
5101:2-5-13(A)(1)**

Purpose

To describe acceptable care, supervision, and discipline of children who are in foster care in the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

Sojourners is committed to providing safe, secure, and caring home environments for children in foster care. We believe discipline must be fair, reasonable, appropriate and proportional to the offense. The following are guidelines for foster caregivers and all Sojourners staff persons:

A. All children in foster care in the Sojourners Care Network will be treated with kindness, consistency, and respect.

B. Foster caregivers and Sojourners staff persons will not discriminate in providing care and supervision to foster children on the basis of race, sex, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, religion, color or national origin.

C. Foster caregivers and Sojourners staff persons shall provide humane, instructive discipline appropriate to the age and functioning level of a child in foster care.

1. Disciplinary methods shall stress praise and encouragement for desired behavior rather than punishment;

2. All rules and expectations made by foster caregivers and Sojourners staff persons shall be explained to a foster child in a manner appropriate to his or her age and understanding during his or her initial orientation and prior to any disciplinary actions for violations of such rules;

3. A foster child will not be punished for action for which he or she has no control;

4. A foster child shall not be punished for bedwetting or in the course of toilet training activities.

D. Foster caregivers and Sojourners staff persons shall not subject a foster child to verbal abuse or swearing; to derogatory remarks about foster children and their families, race(s), sex, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, religion, or their color or national origin; or to threats of physical violence or removal from the foster home.

E. The following practices are prohibited methods of discipline for foster caregivers and Sojourners staff persons:

1. Physical hitting or any type of physical punishment inflicted in any manner upon the body including, but not limited to, spitting, spanking, paddling, punching, shaking, striking, biting, hair pulling, pinching, or rough handling;
2. Physically strenuous work or exercises, when used as a means of punishment;
3. Requiring or forcing a child in foster care to take an uncomfortable position, such as squatting or bending, or requiring a foster child to repeat physical movements when used as a means of punishment;
4. Denial of social or recreational activities for excessive or prolonged periods of time, as defined by the agency as no more than seven consecutive days;
5. Denial of social or casework services, medical treatment, or educational services;
6. Deprivation of meals;
7. Denial of visitation or communication rights with the family of the child in foster care as a means of punishment;
8. Denial of sleep;
9. Denial of shelter, clothing, bedding or restroom facilities;
10. Denial of mail;
11. Subjecting a child in foster care to punishment administered by another child;
12. Washing a child's mouth out with soap;
13. Threatening a child with the loss of love of any person;
14. Threatening a child with punishment by a deity;
15. Group punishment for the behavior of an individual.

Restraint:

A caregiver who has received specific training and annual review in acceptable methods of restraint shall only utilize physical restraint of a foster child. Documentation of such training shall be contained in the foster caregiver's file.

Guidelines:

- A. Physical restraint may be used by a caregiver when there is an eminent risk of physical harm;
 1. For self protection;
 2. For protection of the child from self-destructive behavior;
 3. To protect another person from a foster child;

- B. A foster caregiver shall use only the least restrictive physical restraint necessary to control a situation. The caregiver immediately following the use of physical restraint shall notify; the recommending agency. A detailed written report (submitted on a MUI) of the incident shall be submitted by the caregiver to Sojourners within twenty-four hours following the use of physical restraint. The recommending agency shall notify the placing agency (if different) within twenty-four (24) hours upon receipt of the detailed written report from the caregiver. A copy of the written report shall be placed in the foster child's record and in the foster caregiver's record.
- C. A foster caregiver shall not use any form of prone, chemical, or mechanical restraint on a foster child.
- D. A foster caregiver shall never use face-down or "prone" restraint techniques. Prone restraint is defined as all items or measures used to limit or control the movement or normal functioning of any portion, or all, of an individual's body while the individual is in a face-down position for an extended period of time. Prone restraint includes physical or mechanical restraint.
- E. A foster caregiver shall not use any device to prevent or restrict movement as punishment or for staff convenience.
- F. Any act of omission or commission by a foster caregiver or other member of the household, which results in the death, injury, illness, abuse, neglect or exploitation of a foster child may be grounds for the denial or revocation of a family foster home certificate, this may be a recommendation of the agency supervising a foster caregiver or ODJFS.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #2**

**Religious Participation, Socialization, and Education
5101:2-5-16 & 5101:2-7-11**

Purpose:

To outline the policy pertaining to religious participation, socialization, and education of foster children.

Policy:

Religious Participation:

Sojourners Care Network is committed to the right of all children to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. As a result, we have a deep consideration for, and sensitivity to the religious background of a child in out of home care and families receiving our services.

Sojourners staff shall contact the parents or custodial agency to learn the family's preference regarding foster child's religious participation. Opportunity shall be provided each child in out of home care for practicing the chosen religious beliefs and faith of the child or his family, including dietary restrictions due to beliefs, unless it is determined and documented in the child's case plan by the custodial agency that practicing the child's or family's chosen religious beliefs and faith is not in the child's best interest. A foster child may be encouraged to participate in religious activities, however; a foster caregiver shall not subject a child to any form of religious coercion.

Examples of religious coercion include but are not limited to:

1. Requiring a foster child to attend religious services or activities;
2. Giving a foster child other required activities (i.e. chores) while others attend religious services or activities;
3. Requiring a foster child to watch or listen to religiously oriented television or listen to videotapes or music.

Sojourners shall not require a child in foster care to receive non-emergency medical treatment, which conflicts with the religious tenets or practices of the religion of the child or parent, without the specific written consent of the parent, guardian or custodian.

When a child in foster care requires emergency medical treatment and such treatment conflicts with the religious tenets or practices of the child, parent, guardian, or custodian, the out-of-home caregiver shall immediately transport or arrange for the transportation of the child to a medical facility and contact the custodial agency or individual which placed the child.

A child may be encouraged to participate in religious activities. However, a foster child shall not be baptized or submitted to any religious procedures without prior consent of the child according to their age and functioning level and prior approval of the foster child's parent, guardian or custodian.

Originated: 3-1-99
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 3-9-04
Revised: 02-21-07
Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #2

Socialization and Education:

Sojourners believe that foster care children must be treated with care, dignity and patience.

- A. A foster caregiver shall allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a foster child similar to those, which would be assigned to a family member of the foster caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level.
- B. A foster caregiver shall make arrangements with the placing agency for each school-age foster child to attend a school which complies with the minimum standards as prescribed by the state board of education and shall ensure that the foster child attends school in accordance with the individualized child care agreement (ICCA).
- C. A foster caregiver that provides home schooling for a foster child shall do so only with the approval of the child's custodial agency. Any home schooling program used by a foster caregiver must be approved by the public school district in which the caregiver resides and a copy of the approval shall be placed in the foster home record.
- D. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in the following activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level:
 - 1. Community.
 - 2. School.
 - 3. Recreation.
 - 4. Cultural Heritage.
- E. A foster caregiver shall, as necessary and reasonable, arrange appropriate transportation for foster child to and from activities listed in paragraph (D).
- F. A foster caregiver shall, as appropriate, teach a foster child tasks and skills required for life in the community.

Originated: 3-1-99
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 3-9-04
Revised: 02-21-07
Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #2



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #3**

**Approval of Foster Care and Adoptive Applicants
5101:2-5-20
5101:2-5-13(A)(4)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the assessment and approval process of potential foster and/or adoptive caregivers within the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network provides foster care and adoptive services for young people in Ohio. Individuals and families applying for an initial foster care certificate may also be studied for approval for adoptive placement. A joint homestudy may result in simultaneous approval of the applicant for foster care and/or adoptive placement.

See Agency Policy #4 (“Assessment, Approval, and Documentation of Foster Care and Adoptive Applicants”).



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #4**

Assessment, Approval & Documentation of Foster Care and Adoption Applicants

5101:2-5-20 5101:2-48-12
5101:2-5-13(A)(5) 5101:2-48-12.1
5101:2-48-09

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the assessment and approval process of potential foster or adoptive caregivers within the Sojourners Care Network. Additionally, this policy outlines all of the activities included in the home study process and lists all relevant documentation required by Sojourners Care Network foster or adoptive caregiver applicants.

Policy:

A. Application

Sojourners Care Network is licensed to provide foster care and adoption services for young people. Sojourners staff shall work with prospective applicants throughout the home study and assessment process to determine whether foster care and/or adoption is a viable option for the applicant. Persons applying for an initial foster home certificate may also be studied for approval for adoptive placement.

Upon request, anyone seeking to apply to be a foster or adoptive caregiver shall receive a packet containing an ODJFS Form 1691 "Application for Child Placement." Applicants may be a legally married couple, a single person or co-parent(s)

In order to apply to be a foster caregiver or adoptive parent, an applicant must meet the following guidelines:

- Be at least twenty-one (21) years of age to provide foster care. Eligible adoptive parents are identified in ORC 3107.03, and include:
 - Must be at least eighteen (18) years of age to be an adoptive parent;
 - Two married individuals, at least one of whom is an adult;
 - An unmarried adult;
 - The unmarried minor parent of the person to be adopted;
 - A married adult without the other spouse joining as a petitioner if:
 - The other spouse is a parent of the person to be adopted and supports the adoption;
 - The petitioner and the other spouse are separated under section 3103.06 or 3105.17 of the Revised Code;
 - The failure of the other spouse to join in the petition or to support the adoption is found by the court to be by reason of prolonged unexplained absence, unavailability, incapacity, or circumstances that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult to obtain either the support or refusal of the other spouse.

Originated: 3-1-99
Revised: 10-11-10
Revised: 10-1-11
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #4

- Be a legal resident of the United States (*agency may request a copy of immigration documentation to verify*)
- Reside in the state of Ohio (*If the applicant is not an Ohio resident, the application cannot be considered until the applicant establishes Ohio residency*)

All applications submitted to Sojourners must be made in the full name of each adult of a couple residing in the home, a single person, or each co-parent residing in the home. Sojourners shall only accept a completed ODJFS Form 1691 “Application for Child Placement”. For Foster Care applicants, incomplete applications shall not be processed by the agency and do not afford the applicant an opportunity to a hearing pursuant to Chapter 119 of the Ohio Revised Code. Applications found to contain inaccurate information shall be denied pursuant to rule 5101:2-5-26 of the Ohio Administrative Code. For adoptive applicants, if the agency suspects that a false statement or false document was made or submitted during the homestudy process or after its approval, steps will be taken to make appropriate notification to the applicant/adoptive caregiver in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-33-13. Per rule, the adoptive applicant or parent has the right to respond to the allegations of falsification. An investigation will be conducted according to this rule and appropriate steps taken as outlined in rule.

Sojourners shall not accept more than one application per household and shall not recommend certification of more than one foster home per household.

B. Assessment and Documentation

Each applicant for a foster or adoptive home is required to go through a home study assessment performed by a Sojourners staff member who is a licensed social worker (or equivalent) and has completed Adoption Assessor training requirements set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code. Sojourners is required to notify the local public children’s services agency (PCSA), within ten (10) days, when an adoptive homestudy assessment is initiated within their county.

Written notification to the PCSA shall include the applicant’s name, address, and telephone number; names and dates of birth of all household members at the time of application; a request for any relevant information and/or placements; information on events leading to a removal of any child from the prospective adoptive home; confirmation of household members as determined by a review of the agency records.

If the approved adoptive family provides an authorization for release of information, the agency shall make the homestudy available to any other agency requesting a copy of the homestudy. The agency shall release the homestudy and related materials within fifteen (15) days after the request is made as long as the requirements have been met. The agency shall not release a homestudy when it is determined that the application or the homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) and included in the written report of the homestudy.

The purpose of the homestudy assessment is to determine the applicants’ and their home is in compliance with Chapter 5101:2-7 and/or Chapters 5101:2-48 of the Ohio Administrative Code. During the homestudy process the assessor shall have one or more home visits with the potential caregivers and interview all household occupants over the age of four to determine the suitability of the applicant(s) to be certified as a caregiver. The assessor shall consider the family and home environment including the occupants of the caregivers’ household, the strengths of each applicant and evaluate the appropriateness of accommodations for any child that may be placed in the home.

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Revised: 10-11-10
Revised: 10-1-11
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #4

The homestudy assessment shall start no later than thirty (30) days from the date that Sojourners received a completed application from the potential caregiver. The assessment must be completed within one hundred-eighty (180) days from the date Sojourners received a completed application from a potential caregiver. The homestudy process shall be documented when the assessor completes an ODJFS Form 1673 "Assessment for Child Placement."

C. Homestudy Process

All of the following items shall be carefully covered, reviewed and thoroughly documented in the homestudy assessment:

- **SACWIS/Central Registry Check:** Prior to recommending a home for certification Sojourners shall access the SACWIS system and conduct a search of SACWIS for each applicant and each adult household member of the applicant's home to determine the suitability of the applicant to provide care. If Sojourners cannot access SACWIS then Sojourners shall request that ODJFS conduct a search of the SACWIS/Central Registry.

As a result of the SACWIS/Central Registry check, the agency shall provide a summary report of the involvement in child abuse or neglect, of the applicant or household members. This report shall be placed in the applicant's file, and also placed in the record of every child placed in the home. This summary shall be utilized as a tool to help determine the appropriateness of placement of children.

The SACWIS summary shall include a chronological list of abuse and neglect determinations and allegations in which the person was involved where a PCSA has done the following:

- Determined that abuse or neglect occurred
- Initiated an investigation and the investigation is ongoing
- Initiated an investigation and the agency was unable to determine whether abuse occurred

The SACWIS summary shall not include:

1. Any information concerning a report of abuse or neglect where the public children's services agency determined the abuse or neglect did not occur or was unsubstantiated.
2. The name of the person who or entity that made, or participated in the making of, the report of abuse or neglect. This includes any additional collateral contact who made, or participated in, the report of abuse or neglect.
3. Any information the release of which is prohibited by state or federal law.
4. The name of or other identifying information regarding a child.

The recommending agency shall request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state in which a prospective caregiver or other adult household member in the applicant's home has resided in the five (5) years immediately prior to the date of the criminal records check as required by division (A) of section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.

- **BCII Background Check:** All applicants and any adult members of the household (adults over 18) shall complete a BCII background check using Reason Code 2151.86 as part of the criminal records check process. Sojourners cannot recommend for certification if a person to be certified as a caregiver or any adult member of the applicant's household has been convicted of or plead guilty to any crime listed in Chapter 5101:2-7-02 of the Ohio Administrative Code. All applicants are expected to be in compliance with the conditions set forth in Chapter 5101:2-7-02 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

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Revised: 10-11-10
Revised: 10-1-11
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #4

- **FBI Check:** All applicants and any adult members of the household (adults over 18) shall complete a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check using Reason Code 2151.86 as part of the criminal records check process. Sojourners shall reimburse or pay for the costs of all criminal background checks.
- **Communication:** At least one (1) applicant in the home shall be able to read, write, and speak in English or be able to effectively communicate with any child placed in their home and with the recommending agency.
- **Financial Statement:** The applicant(s) shall complete the ODJFS Form 1681 “Applicant Financial Statement” with the assessor to ensure the caregiver applicant shall have an income sufficient to meet the basic needs of the household and timely payment of shelter costs, utility bills, and other debts. Applicants are required to provide the following documents along with the financial statement:
 - Proof of income for the household for the most recent tax year prior to the date of application
 - Proof of income for the household for a two-month period. The verification of income shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency’s approval.
 - At least one utility bill for each utility necessary to maintain the household. The bill or bills shall not be dated more than six months prior to the agency’s approval.
- **Marital Status:** The applicant(s) shall provide documentation of current marital status, which shall include a marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other verification of marital status, if applicable.
- **Required Notifications:** Caregivers or Prospective Caregivers shall notify the agency in writing within twenty-four (24) hours if a person residing in the home who is at least twelve (12) years old, but under eighteen (18) years old, has been charged, convicted or pleaded guilty to any of the prohibited offenses listed in OAC 5101:2-7-14. In addition, Caregivers or Prospective Caregivers shall notify the agency in writing within twenty-four (24) hours if a person residing in the home who is at least twelve (12) years old, but under eighteen (18) years old, who has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that, if committed by an adult, would constitute a prohibited offense listed in OAC 5101:2-7-14. Notification is also required for any conviction or adjudication of delinquency resulting from a violation of an existing or former law of this state, any other state, or the United States, that is substantially equivalent to any of the offenses listed in OAC 5101:2-7-14. Sojourners shall notify the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in the event the agency learns that a caregiver or prospective caregiver has failed to notify the agency of such violations.
- **Use of Foster Home:** The assessor must ensure the applicant is not operating the home as an adult boarding or rooming house; ensure the applicant is not conducting a business entity including day care or babysitting services, or letting another business use the home for operation. In the event the applicant is conducting “another business” in the home, Sojourners Care Network shall decide whether to recommend approval based on the business’ risk factors to potential foster children in the home.
- **Medical Statement:** The assessor must receive an ODJFS 1653 Medical Statement for caregivers and all members of the household completed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, or certified nurse mid-wife, indicating that the applicant and all household members are free from physical, emotional or mental condition that would endanger children or impair the ability of the household to care for a child. This medical statement must be completed within the twelve (12) months prior to

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the recommendation for certification. Sojourners may ask for additional report(s) of examination by a licensed physician, psychologist or other certified/licensed professional if determined necessary by the assessor or the ODJFS Agency Administrator.

- Determination of Number/Sex/Ages: The assessor shall, in conjunction with the applicants, assess the applicants' capabilities and physical facilities to determine the specific number, age, and sex of children to be placed in the foster home.
- Personal References: The assessor shall obtain three (3) personal reference letters, for each applicant, from adults not related to the applicants and who do not live in the home. References shall speak to the applicant's suitability to parent a child. In addition, the agency shall require that each applicant provide the name of any other agency or organization with which the applicant has been previously recommended for certification as a foster caregiver or has provided care and supervision of children, as well as a written and signed release of information statement in order that any such reference may be contacted. All references shall be contacted by the agency prior to recommendation of certification, per OAC 5101:2-5-20(M). The agency shall contact all adult children of the applicant for reference and document. If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference, this shall be assessed during the home study.
- Fire Inspection: The assessor must receive documented proof of a state certified fire inspection of the applicant's home completed on ODJFS 1200 Fire Inspection form by a state certified fire safety inspector.
- Safety Audit: Applicant(s) must meet all requirements of the ODJFS 01348 Safety Audit. The assessor shall complete this form during a home visit with the applicants not more than six months prior to the date agency recommends home for certification.
- Pre-Placement Training: Prospective Caregivers shall complete pre-placement training in accordance with agency policy #29 ("Pre-Placement and Ongoing Training"), prior to recommendation of initial certification by Sojourners. Pre-placement training must be completed within the eighteen (18) month period immediately prior to the date the agency recommends the home for certification. Sojourners staff persons shall work in collaboration with the prospective caregiver to schedule and provide for pre-placement training needs. Prospective caregiver shall receive all policies and applicable laws during pre-placement training.
- Statement of Understanding: As included in the ODJFS Form 1691 "Application for Child Placement", the applicant(s) must sign the "Statement of Understanding." This statement includes many items, such as:
 - Documents that may be required as part of the application process. Failure to submit documents in a timely manner will render application incomplete and the agency's file on the application will be closed.
 - Requirement that orientation and pre-placement training must be completed within a timely manner. Failure to complete trainings will render application incomplete.
 - Understanding the application does not represent a final commitment by either party. Any placement of a child will be by mutual agreement.
 - Certification that all information contained in the application is accurate and complete to the best of the applicant's knowledge.
 - Permission for the agency to contact all adult children for information applicable to foster care and/or adoptive assessment.

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- Permission to contact all personal references for information applicable to foster care and/or adoptive assessment.
 - Permission to contact any other agency or association for information regarding any work with children or any care or supervision of children provided by myself or another household member.
 - Permission to contact any other agency for information or any other documentation regarding any previous application, certification or approval for foster care and/or adoption.
 - Permission to access information in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS).
 - Certification that applicant has been given access to or a copy of the rules and/or policies applicable to the program for which I am applying (Chapters 5101L2-5, 5101:2-7, 5101:2-48 of the Ohio Revised Code).
 - Agreement to notify the agency of any significant changes affecting the health, marital status, residence, family composition, household occupants, employment, or criminal charges within 24 hours.
 - Applications cannot be accepted for a home that is licensed, regulated, operated under the direction of, or otherwise certified as a facility to care for unrelated persons, by the Ohio Department of Education, a local board of education, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, a community alcohol, drug addiction and mental health services board, Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities, a county board of developmental disabilities, the Ohio Department of Health or juvenile court.
 - A person seeking to provide foster care or to adopt who knowingly makes a false statement that is included in the written report in a homestudy conducted pursuant to Section 3107.031 or Section 5103.03 of the Revised Code is guilty of the offense of falsification under Section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. A homestudy with a knowingly false statement shall not be filed with the court and if filed may be struck from the court's records. Providing false statements during the homestudy process will prevent the agency from considering home for placement of a child and may be grounds for revocation of a foster home certificate and/or denial of adoption approval.
- Child Characteristics Checklist: Prior to the end of the assessment process, applicants shall complete and sign the ODJFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) which indicates the acceptable characteristics of the child the applicant is requesting to provide care.
- Foster-to-Adopt Process (under 6 months): When a foster caregiver who is not an approved adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent, Sojourners shall: assist the foster caregiver in completing the ODJFS Form 1691, and review and attach the following information to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement:
- The most recent ODJFS Form 1653, "Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members" (rev. 6/2009), if deemed necessary by the agency.
 - ODJFS Form 1349, "Foster Home Homestudy" (rev. 01/2003) or the ODJFS Form 1673, "Assessment for Child Placement (Homestudy)" (rev. 12/2014), the ODJFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption" (rev. 12/2006) and the ODJFS Form 1530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment"

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(rev. 12/2014), as applicable (e.g., if the family will have at least 5 children residing in the prospective adoptive home).

- ODJFS Form 1385 “Assessment for Child Placement Update” (rev. 12/2014) forms, if applicable.
- Foster home record.
- New bureau of criminal identification and investigation (BCII) and federal bureau of investigation (FBI) reports as outlined in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.
- Case record information documented by the placement worker’s visits to the foster home.

An assessor must review the information, conduct home visit(s), complete the required form(s), observe the interactions between the child, foster caregiver, and other members of the household, and review pertinent material necessary to complete the ODJFS 1673. A search of the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) or the central registry of abuse and neglect is required.

- **Foster-to-Adopt Process (6+ months):** If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child who is and has been residing with the foster caregiver for at least six consecutive months, Sojourners shall provide the caregiver with the ODJFS Form 1692 “Application for adoption of a foster child.” Consideration is given to the application if the placement is in the best interests of the child. Upon receipt of the application, Sojourners shall review the materials. An additional BCII or FBI check is not required as a condition of acceptance or approval of the application.

D. Upon Completion of the Adoption Homestudy

After completion of the homestudy process, the following steps shall be followed.

After successful completion of the adoptive homestudy process, the agency shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the adoption homestudy within 10 days after the homestudy is approved or disapproved. Written notification shall include the date of approval of the adoptive homestudy and a description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the applicant is being approved.

Sojourners shall make one or more of the following recommendations upon completion of the homestudy.

- Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parent(s) only.
- Recommend the applicant(s) for certification as a foster caregiver(s).
- Approve the applicant(s) as adoptive parents and recommend the applicant(s) for certification as a foster caregiver(s) simultaneously.
- Deny the adoption application.
- Recommend that the applicant(s) certification as a foster caregiver(s) not be approved.
- Deny the adoption application and recommend that the applicant’s certification as a foster caregiver(s) not be approved.

In the event Sojourners denies the applicant for adoption, the written notification shall contain both of the following:

- A detailed explanation of the reason for the denial which sets forth all of the reasons upon which the denial was based.

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- A description of procedures for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.

Sojourners shall document the results of the homestudy on the ODJFS 1609 “Family Permanency Planning Data Summary” (rev. 02/2005). When Sojourners intends to place a child for adoption with an adoptive family, it shall notify the PCSA in the county in which the applicant resides ten (10) days prior to placement.

E. Homestudy Update

Prior to the expiration of the foster care and/or adoptive homestudy certificate, the agency must complete a re-certification procedure to ensure continued compliance with Ohio law.

All home studies, foster care and adoption, shall be updated every two (2) years from the date of approval of the initial certificate or homestudy.

Between ninety (90) and one hundred fifty (150) calendar days prior to the expiration of the foster home certificate or adoptive homestudy, Sojourners shall notify the caregiver of the expiration date. The notification shall identify any information or documentation which a caregiver is required to submit for recertification. The notification shall be on ODJFS 1331, “Notice of Expiration and Reapplication for a Foster Home Certificate.” If the foster caregiver or adoptive parent fails to apply for renewal on the JFS 01331 prior to the expiration date of the certificate or homestudy, the caregiver(s) record shall be closed and must reapply through the initial application process.

The assessor shall complete the JFS 01385 “Child Placement Update” to ensure the caregiver remains in compliance with the requirements set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code, and to determine the continued suitability of the foster or adoptive parent to serve as a caregiver. The re-assessment shall include at least one (1) home visit and one (1) interview with each household member over the age of four (4) years currently residing in the home.

Foster Care and/or Adoptive applicants must submit the following documents at each two-year update:

- A new ODJFS 1653 Medical Statement for all household members as required by Sojourners Care Network.
- Sojourners Care Network requires foster and adoptive applicants obtain a minimum of one (1) written reference from a professional who is knowledgeable about the family’s dynamics, or if unavailable, one (1) personal reference from someone who is aware of the prospective adoptive parent(s) family’s functioning. The reference shall not be completed by a relative.
- A fire inspection by a state certified fire inspector or state fire marshal, using the ODJFS 1200 “Fire Inspection Report for Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS”, if specifically requested by Sojourners.
- An ODJFS 1348 “Safety Audit of a Family Foster Home”.
- An ODJFS 1681 “Applicant Financial Statement”, if there has been a substantial change to the parent(s) financial situation.
- Proof of an annually completed water test by an approved Ohio water testing laboratory.
- A new criminal records check for each adult member of the household every four (4) years.

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The assessor shall provide written notification to the applicant(s) of approval or denial of the update to the adoption homestudy. The written notification shall be provided to the adoptive family within ten (10) days of completion of the homestudy update. If the decision of the assessor is to recommend the approval of a foster and/or adoptive parent(s) homestudy update, the written notification shall include, but not be limited to, the date of the approval of the update to the foster and/or adoptive homestudy and the date the approved update will expire as well as a description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the update is being approved.

F. Homestudy Amendments

Upon notification of a change, an amendment narrative of the assessor's evaluation of the approved foster and/or adoptive family shall be completed and attached to the homestudy within thirty (30) days.

A homestudy amendment shall occur if any of the circumstances noted in Policy #23 ("Required Notification by Caregivers to Sojourners Care Network") occur. In the event of such occurrences, the steps identified in 5101:2-48-12.2 and 5101:2-5-30 shall be conducted by Sojourners.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #5**

**Foster and Adoptive Caregiver Recruitment
5101:2-5-13(A)3
5101:2-48-05**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe strategies the Sojourners Care Network uses to recruit foster and adoptive caregivers.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network has an ongoing need for safe, caring, and qualified foster caregivers. In addition, Sojourners supports services for families wishing to adopt. Individuals and families are recruited from southeast and central Ohio to serve young persons placed in foster care or who are available for adoption.

Population Served by Agency

Sojourners Care Network serves young people from birth to age 21. In addition, the agency provides services to a diverse population of young people with developmental, emotional, physical, and cultural needs. These include:

Developmental Needs:

Young people who have been exposed to traumatic environmental factors that may include poor nutrition; homeless/transient living; loss of family members; poor prenatal or early childhood healthcare; exposure to substance abuse; exposure to family disasters; lack of intellectual or emotional stimulation; living with a family member who is mentally or physically ill; or other environmental factors that may stunt or delay normal childhood development.

Emotional Needs:

The Sojourners Care Network serves young people with emotional needs. Emotional needs may stem from an incident or pattern of incidents of personal trauma such as abuse or neglect. These needs may also arise from living with a parent or other family member who has been abused. Many times young people who have experienced divorce, separation of their primary caregivers or another type of family disruption develop intensive emotional needs. Many of the young people we serve have critical emotional attachment issues stemming from the multiple traumas or the lack of emotionally bonded relationships in their life.

Physical Needs:

Sojourners Care Network does not currently provide foster care services to medically fragile young people, as identified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Sojourners Care Network does serve young people with physical disabilities, only when a caregiver is available with adequate skills and training in order to care for the young person.

Cultural Needs:

Sojourners Care Network serves young people from diverse races, colors, and national origins.

Levels of Care

Sojourners Care Network has identified three (3) levels of care for the foster care program. These levels of care include, Family Foster Care, Treatment Foster Care, and Intensive Foster Care. Upon receiving a referral for placing a child in a foster home, the Sojourners Outreach Services staff completes a Referral Screening Tool. The Referral Screening Tool is utilized to collect pertinent information about the child entering foster care so that an appropriate level of care can be established and the child can be placed with an appropriately matched family. The levels of care are defined as:

Family (Traditional) Foster Care:

This level of care indicates the young person is likely to display minor or transient episodes of emotional, behavioral, or physical problems. The child may require counseling for mild loss, grief, and depression. The child may display mild, attention deficits, oppositionality, school difficulties, or social challenges.

Treatment (Therapeutic) Foster Care:

This level of care indicates the young person is likely to display moderate emotional, behavioral, or physical problems. The child may display a moderate degree of acting out behavior, including aggressiveness and/or delinquent behaviors such as truancy or running away, substance abuse, or other emotional problems. The child may have moderate physical needs which require specialized care. The child has experienced multiple placement changes or has “stepped down” from a more-restrictive environment (e.g., residential treatment).

Intensive (Exceptional) Foster Care:

This level of care indicates the young person is likely to display severe emotional, behavioral, or physical problems. The child may display a severe degree of acting out behavior, including harm to others, self, and/or animals. The child is likely to be engaged with the legal system due to a history of delinquent behavior. The child may have a history of sexually aggressive or offending behavior. The child may experience psychotic symptoms, including hallucinations or delusions. The child may have serious medical needs, which require intense intervention.

Primary Recruitment Activities

Local Media

Sojourners Care Network will target local media outlets, including newspapers, radio, and/or television, in the region served by the agency. Through press releases, newspaper articles, and interviews, the agency intends to educate and inform the public about the need for foster and adoptive parents. In addition, Sojourners Care Network will continue to provide regional partners and interested persons with the agency newsletter (“Sojo Family News”).

Outreach Presentations

Sojourners Care Network will engage community partners, including service organizations, public agencies, schools, and small businesses to cultivate prospective caregivers. Through informational meetings and displays, the agency will inform

interested persons about the need and the process to become a foster and/or adoptive parent.

Online Recruitment and Social Media

In addition to local efforts, the agency will continue to promote the need for foster care and adoption through regularly updated online articles and stories, as well as making a variety of foster care resources available online. At present, the agency website (www.sojournerscare.net) and Sojourners Care Network Facebook page offers information about programs, activities and events, news stories, contact information, and required documentation. The agency is also in the process of developing additional online materials, such as how-to guides, forms, and networking tools, which will increase the ease of access to the licensure process and improve the support to caregivers

Intra-Network Recruitment

Sojourners Care Network will continue to recruit foster and adoptive through current network of providers. Through phone contacts, network gatherings, and direct mailings, the agency will solicit potential caregivers from current providers. All potential providers will receive phone contact by an agency worker within five (5) working days, and will receive a copy of the agency's recruitment materials. All prospective providers also receive the agency's monthly newsletter, which covers policy changes, training schedules, events, activities, and other important agency information.

Sojourners Care Network does not deny the opportunity to become foster or adoptive caregivers on the basis of race, color, or national origin. In addition, the agency does not deny or delay placement based on the basis of race, color, or national origin. Based on the size and capacity of the agency, potential caregivers are served based on their individually established timeframes.

Sojourners shall have a fee structure that is inclusive to all potential and approved adoptive caregivers. The fee structure shall allow parents of various income levels the opportunity to adopt. Fees shall be assessed using a standardized, uniformly applied sliding scale based on the family's ability to pay. The ability to pay a fee shall not influence the choice of the most appropriate parent(s) for a child.

Sojourners provides open access to the homestudy process. Through visiting our location in McArthur or by contacting our twenty-four (24) hour on-call system, applicants may readily access the homestudy process.

Sojourners shall provide all prospective adoptive applicants information regarding adoption procedures, including Policy #87 ("Adoption Services") and ODJFS 1675 ("Ohio Adoption Guide") within seven (7) days of inquiry. Sojourners shall respond to all inquiries within seven (7) working days. Applicants shall have equal access to the homestudy process, and may contact the agency during normal business hours or may contact our twenty-four (24) hour on-call system. Pre-service training shall be inclusive to diverse cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic communities.

Sojourners Care Network regularly participates in recruitment efforts in our community. The Licensing Specialist will meet with each potential foster caregiver, in their home, to review application materials on their individually established timeframes. Pre-Placement training may be offered by Sojourners staff pending staff availability. Linkages will be made and quarterly Pre-Placement training schedules offered by the Regional Training Centers will be provided.

Sojourners Care Network will train all staff persons on cultural issues, to gain knowledge of effective methods of working with diverse cultural, racial, ethnic and economic communities. In

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addition, the agency is capable of contracting with providers to address any potential linguistic barriers.

Sojourners Care Network seeks to recruit safe, caring, and qualified foster caregivers throughout the region served by Sojourners Care Network. Primary target areas are located in southeastern Ohio. Specific target counties include Athens, Fairfield, Hocking, Meigs, Pickaway, Ross, and Vinton Counties.

All foster caregiver recruitment activities and materials shall be in compliance with MEPA and Title VI, the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq., as amended, and the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #6**

**Foster Caregiver Reimbursement and Stipend Payments
5101:2-5-13(A)(5)
5101:2-5-38**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe all payments to foster caregivers, including reimbursement for providing foster care, reimbursement for transportation, and foster caregiver training stipend payments.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network reimburses foster caregivers for the costs associated with caring for foster children. Reimbursement rates are determined by a number of factors, including the cost of care, challenges associated with caring for children with multiple needs, and are based in conjunction with established contracts with referral sources.

Standard Sojourners Care Network Per Diem Rates:

- \$20 per child for Family Foster Care
- \$30 per child for Treatment Foster Care
- \$40 per child for Intensive Foster Care

These rates are subject to amendment based on a number of factors, including increases in agency costs associated with the care of children (e.g., increased staff transportation of youth, day treatment services). Foster caregiver reimbursement payments are provided the fifth (5th) day of the following calendar month. Foster caregivers are required to transport young people to all mandated services, and may be reimbursed at the established rate, in accordance with Policy 36 (“Foster Caregiver Mileage Reimbursement”). The rate of reimbursement for respite care is the same as the level as the youth’s level of care (e.g., family, treatment, intensive).

Reimbursement may be requested for extraordinary expenses (e.g., supplies for educational or extracurricular activities) and must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

Training Reimbursement

Sojourners Care Network shall make stipend payments to foster caregivers to compensate their cost in attending training sessions. Stipend payments shall be made within one hundred and twenty (120) Calendar days of the completion of the training event for continuing training or within one hundred twenty calendar days after certification for pre-placement training. Stipend payments may not be held or otherwise deferred pending reimbursement by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS). Stipend payments shall be rendered for fractional hours in quarter hour increments. A training hour is defined as sixty (60) consecutive minutes of instruction and may include a break of no longer than five (5) minutes per training hour when a training session is longer than one (1) training hour in duration.

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The stipend rate paid by recommending agencies shall be calculated as follows:

- Pre-Placement Training: The agency that provides the training shall record the preplacement training in the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS) and shall be responsible for paying the stipend to the caregiver upon certification. Foster caregivers will be reimbursed at a rate of ten (\$10) dollars, per successfully completed hour of training, for the number of hours required by Policy 29 (“Pre-placement and Ongoing Training”).
- Ongoing Training: The Foster caregiver's recommending agency shall be responsible for paying all stipends to the caregiver and shall enter all of the training sessions into SACWIS. Caregivers will be reimbursed within one hundred and twenty (120) calendar days of completion of a training session, at a rate of ten (\$10) dollars per successfully completed hour of training. Stipend payments may be issued for:
 - Family Foster Caregivers: Not more than forty (40) hours of continuing training during the two-year certification period.
 - Treatment Foster Caregivers: Not more than sixty (60) hours of continuing training during the two-year certification period.

Sojourners Care Network may decline stipend payment to a foster caregiver, if:

- The agency determines the foster caregiver has not successfully acquired the skills the training was designed to impart, and as a result the agency shall require the foster caregiver to repeat the training course in accordance with the corrective action plan.
- Training was beyond the scope of the caregivers Individual Training Needs Assessment and/or Continuing Training Plan.
- Training exceeded the number of hours required by the foster caregiver.
- Training was part of a program of self-directed study or other electronic mediums.

Continuing training hours obtained by a foster caregiver by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers, or by providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers **are eligible for stipend** and training allowance reimbursement in the amount of hours as specified in the foster caregiver’s written needs assessment and continuing training plan. Any continuing training hours obtained by a foster caregiver by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers or providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers in excess of the specified amount in the written needs assessment and continuing training plan shall not be reimbursable.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #7**

**Transfer of Foster Care Homes
5101:2-5-31**

Purpose:

Sojourners Care Network develops foster caregivers as members of the organizational team. Our organization deeply values caregivers and their contributions to the growth and development of foster children. Sojourners Care Network seeks to work through and resolve any issues or concerns that foster caregivers may have. However, Sojourners understands that our agency may not meet the needs of every caregiver. Sojourners will support the decision of any caregiver to transfer their license to another agency. Additionally, Sojourners Care Network will work cooperatively with the other recommending agency to resolve any remaining issues with a caregiver and facilitate a smooth transition.

The following policy outlines the procedures for transferring a foster caregiver certification. This transfer policy is mandated by The Ohio Administrative Code and is followed by all certifying agencies. Sojourners will follow this policy as both the sending agency and receiving agency in the transfer process.

Transfer of a Foster Care License:

An agency will consider a transfer request from a currently certified foster home with:

1. A Public Child Placing Agency (PCPA),
2. A Private Noncustodial Agency (PNA) certified by ODJFS that recommends foster homes of the same type
3. A Public Children Services Agency (PCSA).

Sojourners does not solicit home studies or transfers from other agencies where the purpose of locating a family of specific race, color, or national origin.

A foster caregiver certified to operate a specialized foster home may transfer to an agency that does not operate a specialized foster home program, if the caregiver agrees that upon execution of transfer, the foster home designation will be identified as a family foster home.

An agency will accept a transfer of a foster home from another agency only if the foster caregiver has been certified with the sending agency for a **minimum of one year**. An exception shall be made for the following reasons:

1. A foster caregiver has relocated to another county not served by the foster caregivers' recommending agency.
2. The foster caregiver's recommending agency ceases to recommend foster homes for certification to ODJFS.
3. If both the sending and receiving agency agree to the transfer.

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Upon receipt of a written request from a foster caregiver, who has been certified with the sending agency for a minimum of one year or meets the aforementioned exception requirements, expressing the desire to transfer from the caregivers current recommending agency shall consider the request and make a decision whether it wishes to proceed further with an assessment to determine whether to accept the transfer.

A foster caregiver shall not initiate more than one transfer request during a certification period and only to one agency at a time.

Before accepting the transfer of a foster home the receiving agency shall contact the sending agency in writing to notify the sending agency that a request has been received and to request a complete copy of the caregiver's foster home records (excluding personal references and criminal records check.)

Upon receipt of the transfer request from the receiving agency the sending agency shall inform the receiving agency of any decision to not place any more children in the foster caregiver's home including the reasons why this decision was made. If the agency still wished to proceed with exploring the transfer request the receiving agency shall notify the sending agency in writing.

Transfer of Records

Prior to sending the records to the receiving agency, the sending agency shall obtain a signed release of information authorization from the foster caregiver authorizing the release of information to the receiving agency. The release of information may be obtained by either agency or the foster caregiver.

Within 15 working days of the receipt of the signed release of information and any applicable copying fee, the sending agency shall send a complete copy of the foster home records (excluding references and criminal records checks) to the receiving agency.

The records shall be sent electronically, by certified mail, return receipt requested or hand delivered by agency staff. If records are hand delivered, the sending agency shall be provided with a receipt showing the date the records were delivered to the receiving agency. The receiving agency shall document the date of receipt of the records.

The record information to be transferred includes:

1. The most recent homestudy
2. Homestudy updates
3. Training records
4. Fire inspection reports
5. Safety audits
6. Medical reports
7. All compliant or rule noncompliance investigations
8. Any applicable corrective action plans
9. Most recent report of the alleged perpetrator search of child abuse and neglect information from the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS)
10. Foster home exit interviews

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Revised: 11-18-03

Revised: 02-21-07

Revised: 10-1-11

Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #7

The sending agency shall notify the receiving agency of the nature of any outstanding complaint or rule noncompliance investigations and any corrective action plans that have not been fully implemented

The receiving agency shall accept the copy of the foster caregivers' records only from the sending agency. The receiving agency shall not accept a copy of the records from the foster caregiver.

The sending agency may charge the receiving agency a reasonable fee for copying the records not to exceed twenty-five cents per page. No additional fee may be charged to any party. If a fee is charged for copying the records, the records shall not be sent until the fee is paid. **Sojourners does not currently charge a copying fee.**

Transfer Assessment

Upon receipt of the foster caregivers' records, the receiving agency shall assign an assessor to review the information received and conduct an assessment of the transfer request.

The assessor shall review the foster caregivers' foster home records and any other information received from the sending information to make an informed decision whether the agency wishes to proceed with the transfer request.

The assessor shall complete the review and make a recommendation to the receiving agency regarding the transfer **within 60 days** after the receipt of records. If the transfer review cannot be completed within 60 days, the assessor shall document in the foster home records the reason why the review cannot be completed within 60 days.

The assessor shall contact staff from the sending agency and the foster caregiver to ascertain the reasons why the request is being made, to determine if there are foster children in the home and to identify the agency with custody of the children.

The assessor shall make at least one visit to the foster home and conduct a face to face meeting with each foster caregiver and all household members.

The assessor shall not recommend acceptance of the transfer unless the assessor is satisfied that any outstanding complaints or rule noncompliance investigations are not material to the request to transfer the home and the safety of any children who are or may be placed in the home.

All transfer review activities shall be documented in the receiving agency's foster home records.

Transfer Approval

The receiving agency shall not approve the transfer request until the following information has been received and approved by the agency:

1. Three new personal references for the foster caregivers from three persons who are not related to the caregiver and who do not live with the caregiver
2. Receive new references from all adult children of the caregiver(s). If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the transfer process and documented in the caregiver record
3. A new criminal record check has been obtained, reviewed and approved by the assessor for all persons' subject to a criminal records check residing in the home

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FF/Tx Policy #7

4. A new safety audit of the foster home has been conducted to verify that the home meets all current safety requirements for foster homes
5. Documentation of the assessor's decision to recommend the approval of the transfer request and the reasons for the decision

The receiving agency who approves the transfer request shall maintain all information sent by the original recommending agency as well as any information gathered in the transfer review process and the assessor's written recommendation as a part of the receiving agency's foster caregiver records.

The receiving agency, who does not approve the transfer request, shall maintain a copy of the records received from the sending agency and the assessor's written recommendation to reject the transfer request shall be maintained by the agency for at least two years.

The approval or rejection of a transfer request rests solely with the receiving agency subject to the approval of ODJFS and creates no right of appeal pursuant to chapter 119 of the Ohio revised code for any party to the transfer request.

An agency is not required to accept a transfer of a foster home from another agency.

The agency shall send written notification to the sending agency and foster caregiver of the receiving agency's decision within 5 working days of the decision.

If the decision is to approve the transfer request, all information contained in the copy of the caregiver's record from the current recommending agency, as well as any information gathered during the transfer assessment shall be incorporated into the receiving agency's foster care provider record.

If the sending agency has the appropriate access to SACWIS, the sending agency shall enter the applicable data into the system to complete the transfer to the receiving agency.

If the sending agency does not have the appropriate access to SACWIS to enter the transfer, then either the sending agency or the receiving agency shall make a recommendation to ODJFS to transfer the foster home by submitting the completed JFS 01334 containing all applicable signatures.

Transfer during the Recertification Period

If a transfer of a foster home is pending within the 90 days immediately prior to the expiration of the certificate the foster homes recommending agency shall be responsible for conducting the recertification review and recommendation, if there is no agreement between the sending and receiving agencies

The agency may seek an agreement to determine which agency (sending or receiving) will conduct the recertification review, if a transfer of a foster home is pending within ninety days immediately prior to the expiration of the certificate.

Agency Orientation

The receiving agency shall provide an orientation to the foster caregiver of the agency's policies and procedures for foster caregivers prior to or not later than thirty calendar days after a transfer request has been processed by ODJFS.

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Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #7

Placements

Prior to accepting a transfer, the receiving agency shall ensure that the custodial agency of any child currently placed in the home agrees to the transfer.

If the custodial agency does not agree to the transfer while a child in its custody is placed in the home the transfer shall not take place until the child is no longer placed in the home.

A child shall not be removed from a foster caregiver's home solely because the caregiver seeks to transfer his/her foster home certificate to another agency.

While the transfer request is pending the sending agency shall continue to work with the foster caregiver as it does with all other foster caregivers associated with the agency and shall continue to provide the caregiver with notification of training events needed according to the foster caregivers written needs assessment and continuing Training Plan. The sending agency shall allow the foster caregiver to attend any such events and shall continue to meet with the caregiver regarding the care of any child placed in the home.

SACWIS Data Entry and ODJFS Certification

If the receiving agency does not have appropriate access to the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), the receiving agency will complete an ODJFS Form 1334 and will enter the necessary data into the SACWIS database to register the home as a resource.

Following receipt of the ODJFS Form 1334 by the foster care Licensing Section, ODJFS will issue a foster home certificate with receiving agency's identification number and enter information into SACWIS database to indicate that the sending agency's records for the foster caregiver have been closed.

The new certificate shall be effective from the date of the transfer until the end of the current certification period.

Release of information for Adoptive Purposes

Upon receipt of a signed release of information form the agency shall release a copy of a foster care home study to an adoption agency when the foster caregiver is being considered as an adoptive parent.

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Revised: 02-21-07
Revised: 10-1-11
Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #7



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #8**

**Civil Rights of Foster Child or Teenage Mother
5101:2-5-13(A)24**

Purpose:

To prevent discrimination against foster children and teenage mothers.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network will not tolerate discrimination against any child or teenage mother based on race, color, sex, religion, disability, age, gender, national origin, military status, ancestry or any other factor as specified in the Civil/Rights Act of 1964, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and subsequent amendments. Sojourners Care Network will comply with all appropriate Federal and State Laws regarding such regulations. The child or teenage mother will be made aware of the Client Rights Summary and Client Grievance Procedure upon admission to the Sojourners Care Network program.

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Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 02-14-07
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #8



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #9**

**Notification of Family Foster Home When a Foster Child in
That Home Becomes Available for Adoption
5101:2-5-13(A)7**

Purpose:

To outline the notification process when a young person becomes available for adoption.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network currently provides adoption services. Upon the event the custodian informs Sojourners Care Network and or placing agency that a child can be adopted, Sojourners Care Network will immediately forward any and all information to the relevant foster caregiver. Sojourners Care Network will also include a notification in writing of a description of the adoption process and the guidelines foster caregivers must follow if they are interested in pursuing adoption.

The Sojourners Care Network will provide secondary support to foster caregivers and the agency facilitating adoption care services.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #10**

**Medical and Dental Policy and Procedures
5101:2-7-07(A)**

Purpose:

To outline procedures for routine and emergency medical and dental care of foster children

Policy:

Supportive Services Team member will provide the foster parent with the procedure for accessing and paying for medical or dental services for each child at the time of placement. Each child will have one of the following: A Medicaid card, insurance coverage or a procedure for direct billing of services to the county.

Special arrangements for medical or dental care may be made through the Supportive Services Team member after receiving administrative authorization. Sojourners Care Network will not be financially responsible for any unauthorized medical or dental services incurred by a child in placement.

Time Frame for Examination

- A. **Physicals** each child is required to receive a complete physical upon initial placement from his/her home and then annually thereafter. The first physical must occur within 60 days of placement. Annual examinations are to occur no later than 30 days from the anniversary date of the child's last comprehensive physical examination.
- B. **Dental** Initial dental assessment for children over 3 years is to occur within 60 days of placement from his/her home. Annual dental examinations are to occur no later than 30 days from the anniversary date of child's last dental.
- C. **Vision/Hearing** Initial vision and hearing must occur no later than 60 days after child's placement from his/her home. Reexaminations shall occur whenever a condition or impairment indicates a need and/or when professional examiner recommends follow-up examinations.
- D. **Infants** (2 and under)-All infants age two and under shall receive a required pediatric care as prescribed by a licensed physician.

Sojourners Care Network is required to follow all recommendations for follow-up examinations given by the physician or licensed professional.

Documentation

The foster caregiver and Supportive Services Team member will document each medical, dental, or other visit and the treatment recommended and provided. The original documentation will be filed in the child's file with copies sent to the referral agency. Current immunization records and records of tuberculosis screening, as prescribed by applicable law or regulation, will be kept for each child in foster care. Any known allergies will be documented on the intake summary, care

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FF/Tx Policy #10

agreement, and medication log. Any seizures, injuries, and medically pertinent incidents will be documented in the child's file through a Major and Unusual Incident Report (MUI).

Procedure for Routine Medical and Dental Care

1. Schedule appointment for medical or dental care.
2. Notify the Supportive Services Team member of the following information:
 - a. Child's name
 - b. Name and address of the health care provider
 - c. Date of the appointment
 - d. Nature of the health problem
3. Follow the referring agency's procedure for billing of services.
4. Follow procedures for documentation of appointment results and recommendations for follow-up.
5. Notify the Supportive Services Team member of results of the appointment and any medications prescribed, changed, or discontinued by the health care provider.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL OR DENTAL CARE

Any child in placement who requires emergency medical or dental care shall be taken immediately to a health care provider. The foster caregiver will need the Foster Parent ID Letter and Authorization to Secure Emergency Services form. The following procedure is to be used in emergency situations only. Any injury or illness that can wait for routine medical or dental care should follow the routine care procedure.

Procedure for Emergency Medical or Dental Care

1. Seek immediate medical or dental care.
2. Follow the instructions on the care agreement for emergency health care.
3. Notify Supportive Services Team member and give the following information:
 - a. Child's name
 - b. Nature of emergency
 - c. Name and location of the health care provider.
4. Follow procedures for documentation of services.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #11**

Over The Counter Medications

Purpose:

To describe how and when over-the-counter medications can be given to foster children.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network does not permit over-the-counter medication to be given to children without instructions from health professionals. Since many foster children are presently taking prescription medications, there is the possibility of interactions with over-the-counter medications. In the case of children not presently on medications there is the possibility of serious side effects or overdosing with over-the-counter medication. Therefore, foster caregivers and staff that want to give a child an over-the-counter medication must consult with a health care provider and report the child's symptoms and all medication the child is presently taking so that the health care provider can recommend an over-the counter medication and the proper dose that will be acceptable and safe for the child to take.

The health care provider's recommendations regarding over-the-counter medications should be documented in the foster caregiver's daily log or case notes in the child's file and the over-the-counter medication administration should be documented on the medication log.

These forms will be filed in the child's file.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #12**

**Confidentiality of Young People and their Families
5101:2-7-04**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure complete client confidentiality of young people in care as well as their families.

Policy:

All information Sojourners Care Network receives concerning a child to be placed with a caregiver will be shared with and explained to the prospective foster caregiver prior to placement. Sojourners Care Network staff will discuss with the prospective caregiver to the child's strengths and assets, potential problems and needs, and initial intervention strategies for addressing these areas. As full treatment team members, foster caregivers have access to full disclosure of information concerning the child. With this access goes the responsibility to maintain organizational standards of confidentiality regarding such information.

Foster caregivers will not disclose or knowingly allow the disclosure of any information regarding a foster child or the foster child's primary family to persons not directly involved in the foster child's care and treatment team which may include Sojourners Care Network staff, counselors, medical providers, respite providers, school personnel, and others according to the child's needs. In a situation where caregivers are unsure whether information may be shared with an individual, Sojourners Care Network staff should be contacted to discuss who any given information.

A foster caregiver will maintain a record on each foster child, which will include, but not be limited to:

1. A copy of the ICCA between Sojourners Care Network and the family foster home and any written case plan provided by Sojourners Care Network.
2. Report of scholastic performance that shall include report cards, diplomas, and certificated of achievement or merit.
3. Medical information provided by a foster child's physician and by the placing agency, and current instructions regarding a foster youth's health care.
4. The name and telephone number of Sojourners Care Network's contact person or the custody holding persons or agency as applicable.
5. Data, which is pertinent to the child's life book as referenced in rule 5101:2-42-67 of the Administrative Code.

A foster caregiver parent will give a foster child's record and all other official documents regarding the foster child to Sojourners Care Network when the foster child leaves the home.

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Revised: 6-1-16

FF/Tx Policy #12



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #13**

**Medications
5101:2-7-07**

Purpose:

To define the administration, storage, destruction, monitoring, and documentation of medication for foster youth.

Policy:

A licensed medical professional will prescribe prescription medication. Medication will be given only to the child for whom it has been prescribed and only in the prescribed dosage. Any side effects of prescription medications will be reported immediately to the prescribing physician and the Supportive Services Team member.

Each child, when developmentally and age appropriate will be informed in advance about the benefits, risks, and alternatives to planned medications.

Medication Administration:

The foster caregiver or staff will administer or supervise the administration of prescription drugs to a foster child only for whom the medication was prescribed. All medication will be given according to the prescribing physician's instructions.

Foster caregivers will follow the care agreement instructions for payment when filling prescriptions. Foster caregivers are responsible for refilling prescriptions when supply runs low, provided a refill is required.

Right to Refuse:

Children will be encouraged to accept medication, but will not be forced to take it. Children have the right to refuse any medication, unless law or court order has limited those rights. It is the responsibility of foster caregivers and staff to inform children that refusal to accept prescribed medication may result in persistence of symptoms or problems. Staff will document in case notes that this information was discussed with child.

Child Self-Medication:

Children may administer their own medications as part of an approved self-medication program with careful review by foster caregivers and Supportive Services Team member. Documentation of physician approval, the plan (including access, storage, administration, documentation, and supervision) and the prescribed medications (copies of prescriptions) will be placed in the child's file. The status or progress of the self-medication program will be addressed in case notes and reports by foster caregivers and Supportive Services Team member.

Side Effects:

Foster caregivers and Supportive Services Team member will access information regarding side effects from the prescribing physicians, ICCA, and Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology

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FF/Tx Policy #13

manual. Any side effects of medications will be reported immediately to the prescribing physicians and Supportive Services Team member and documented on Medication Log. Each FCG will be given a copy of the Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology manual. This will be documented on the ICCA.

Medication Storage:

All prescription medications in a foster home will be kept in the original containers labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, correct dosage, name of prescribing physician, and relevant instructions. Medications will be stored in locked cupboard, box or cabinet or other location accessible only to authorized persons. Medications for external use only will be kept in a separate area, also accessible only to authorized person. A medication that must be refrigerated will be stored on a locked metal box in the refrigerator. This is to prevent tampering, accidental ingestion and/or over dosage of any medication.

Storage Procedure:

When a child receives a prescribed medication, the foster caregiver or staff will:

1. Inventory the medication regarding amount and expiration date and enter the information on the Medication List
2. Place the medication in the appropriate locked container and store in refrigerator or locked medicine chest. No medication will be administered past the expiration date.

Medication Documentation:

Each child's record will include a record of medications (prescribed and over-the-counter medications) received by the child. Documentation will include the medications given, the time, the dosage, and the name of the person administering the medication. Medication logs are to be turned in monthly to the Supportive Services Team member.

A child who is participating in a medically approved self-medication program will document his/her medications on a medication log or report to foster caregivers and have them document the actual recording in the log.

Refusal to take a medication or missed doses of prescription medication will be documented on the medication log and communicated to the physician and Supportive Services Team member, as appropriate. Change, additions or discontinuation of medications will be documented on the medication log.

Disposal of Medications:

Prescribed medications will be disposed of in a safe manner when the prescription is no longer current. The foster caregiver or Supportive Services Team member will contact a pharmacist, state health official, or physician regarding the proper method of destruction or disposal of medication. The information to be documented on the child's medication log after destruction/disposal includes the name and dosage of the medication, the number, the number/amount of the medication being destroyed, the physician's name, expiration date, reason for destruction/disposal, date and method of disposal.

Infection control procedures will be used when handling or disposing of syringes and other sharp objects. To prevent needle, stick injuries, needles should never be recapped purposely bent or broken by hand, removed from disposable syringes, or otherwise manipulated by hand. After they are used, disposable syringes and needles shall be placed in puncture-resistant containers for disposal. The local Health Department will be accessed for disposal procedure.

Monitoring:

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FF/Tx Policy #13

Medication reviews will occur monthly when the Supportive Services Team member reviews the medication logs with the foster caregiver during home visits. The prescribing physicians as needed or recommended will evaluate the appropriateness of continuing medications. In addition, physician(s) and/or other relevant team members will review any changes in medication and notify all team members as needed.

Reasons for changes in medications will occur through written physician orders or in worker's case notes.

School Medication:

Any medication to be administered while the child is at school, pre-school, or a day care facility should follow the facility's regulations. Medication given while the child is at a school or day care facility will be documented on the medication log as given at school.

Allergies:

Any known allergies to medications, food, or other substances will be documented on the child's medication log.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #14**

Search and Seizure

Purpose:

To articulate the proper justification and processes for search and seizure.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network believes that all children should be treated with dignity and respect. This includes respect for a child's person and his/her personal property. For reasonable cause, it may at times be necessary to conduct a proper search for missing or stolen articles or for the control of contraband. Just and reasonable cause to believe the involved child is in possession of such materials will be the test before the decision to search a child's person or property is permitted. When such a search takes place, the foster caregiver and at least one staff member must be present. In addition, whenever possible, the child should be present and involved. Foster caregivers, staff or any permitted person authorized to complete the search may not search clothes while being worn, may not touch a person for the purpose of search or view them in a state of undress.

With a spirit of courtesy, only the degree of orderly search necessary to ascertain the presence or absence of missing or stolen articles or contraband and the removal of such articles is permitted. The decision to or method of search is not to be used as discipline. If contraband is found, the Sojourners Administrator is to be immediately contacted and absolutely no further action except as instructed is to be taken. If missing or stolen articles are found, and their legal owner can be identified, they are to be promptly tendered to the Sojourners Administrator for appropriate disposition.

Any search motivated by information from or requested by persons other than Sojourners Care Network staff, foster parents, must be first referred to the Sojourners Administrator before any action is to be taken. The right of youth to consult with legal counsel prior to consenting to a search is to be respected.

An incident report covering the circumstances surrounding a specific search must be made to the Sojourners Administrator within 24 hours.

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Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy#14



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #15**

Death of a Child

Purpose:

To outline the process for reporting the death of a child.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network will respond to the death of a child in a responsible, reasonable, and sensitive manner. Staff will notify the law enforcement officials and custodial agency of the death of a child. Sojourners Care Network will cooperate fully with any external investigation and conduct an internal investigation into the circumstances of the death.

Procedure:

In the event of a death of a foster child the following procedure will be followed:

1. The foster caregiver will call:
 - a. 911 or Emergency Medical Services
 - b. Sojourners Care Network
 - c. Law Enforcement Official
2. The ODJFS Agency Administrator (or designee) will notify:
 - a. Custody Agency
 - b. Appropriate licensing supervisors
 - c. Sojourners Care Network attorney
3. The foster caregiver and Supportive Services Team member will write a detailed MUI report within 24 hours.
4. The completed child and foster home files are to be given to the Sojourners Administrator.
5. **NO INFORMATION IS TO BE GIVEN TO THE MEDIA**

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Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #15



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #16**

Mail Inspection

Purpose:

To provide procedures for inspecting mail when necessary.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network respects a child's privacy regarding his/her incoming and outgoing mail. However, Sojourners Care Network recognizes that it may be necessary to inspect the physical contents of a child's mail to prevent the introduction of contraband into the home. The staff member and/or foster caregiver must have just and reasonable cause for inspecting mail. The following procedures are to be used whenever a child's mail is to be opened.

1. Whenever it appears to a staff member or foster caregiver that a child's incoming mail may contain contraband the following steps should be taken:
 - a. The foster caregiver shall hold incoming mail of the child.
 - b. Notify the appropriate staff that the mail is present in the home.
 - c. Youth may open the mail in the presence of staff and staff will observe the mail for the presence of contraband.
 - d. **Staff should never open a youth's mail if contraband is suspected unless the treatment/case plan has other directives which have been approved. In no instance is the mail to be read or reviewed.**

If the inspection of mail reveals the presence of contraband the Sojourners Administrator shall be promptly contacted and his/her instructions followed.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #17**

**Emergency Evacuation
5101:2-7-12(H)(N)**

Purpose:

To outline the required foster caregiver evacuation plan.

Policy:

All Sojourners Care Network licensed foster homes will comply with the following in regard to fire/emergency evacuation plans:

1. Draw a floor plan, as close to scale as possible, that identifies the use of each room (i.e. bedroom, kitchen, etc.) and that shows the designated emergency and alternate escape routes, each in a different color.
 - a. Post floor plan on each level of the home.
 - b. Submit a copy to the Supportive Services Team member.
 - c. Review the evacuation plan with each child.
2. Each child entering the home/site will be instructed on what to do if an emergency evacuation is necessary, and will sign an orientation acknowledgment form.
3. Adequate prevention equipment (according to state regulations) will be properly installed and maintained according to manufacturer recommendations. Children's equipment and this training will be documented in the case notes.
4. Review plan with children every January, and document in foster caregiver's daily log and monthly report.
5. Designate a specific "safe" common meeting place in case an evacuation occurs.
6. Make children aware and knowledgeable of how to access emergency phone numbers.
7. Emergency phone list shall contain:
 - a. Police
 - b. Fire
 - c. Ambulance
 - d. Poison Control
 - e. Recommending Agency
 - f. Placing Agency



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #18**

CPR and First Aid

5101:2-5-33 (C) (3)(a)(iii)(b)
5101:2-7-16(B)

Purpose:

To explain the importance of CPR and First Aid training to provide safe environments for foster children and to define who will attend this training.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network seeks to place foster children in foster homes that are caring, secure, and safe. Foster caregivers and staff are required to be trained in CPR and First Aid.

CPR and First Aid training will provide each person with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of most situations when CPR or First Aid for foster children may be necessary and when medical assistance is not available or is delayed. CPR and First Aid knowledge and skills often mean the difference between life and death, between temporary and permanent disability and between rapid recovery and long hospitalization.

All foster caregivers, including both partners of a couple, and Direct Placement providers must complete CPR and First Aid training taught by a certified trainer prior to placement of a child in their homes. This training is required to be updated prior to the renewal/expiration date.

CPR and First Aid training hours may count as part of the pre-service or in-service training hours for foster caregivers or staff.

Sojourners Care Network will pay the cost of CPR and First Aid provided the foster caregivers use the training center that Sojourners Care Network provides. The foster caregivers can use a certified CPR and First Aid trainer of their choice, but will be obligated to pay any cost over and above what Sojourners Care Network CPR and First Aid provider costs. Foster Caregivers shall communicate with the Licensing Specialist and/or Training and Compliance Coordinator prior to outside training.

Sojourners Care Network will not pay mileage to or from CPR and First Aid training.

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Revised: 6-1-16
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FF/Tx Policy #18



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #19**

**Telephone in Foster Homes
5101:2-7-12(G)**

Purpose:

To outline the telephone in foster home policy.

Policy:

It is Sojourners Care Network policy that all foster homes have an operating telephone at all times in the home so that there can be immediate access between the foster home and the Sojourners Care Network. Foster children have the right to have contact with significant other.

As a foster care agency we recognize the need for foster caregivers to have the ability to monitor telephone calls that children in care may make and to prevent unwanted long distance telephone bills. We recommend that the foster caregiver consult with their phone company regarding features that are available to block long distance calls. If foster caregiver does not have access to long distance services, it is the responsibility of the foster caregiver to ensure access to communication with the child's family (if approved) and placing agency representative.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #20**

Absent Without Leave (AWOL)

Purpose:

To outline procedures when child is AWOL.

Policy:

A child is considered absent without leave when the child has been missing for the amount of time on his/her individual care agreement without the foster parent's knowledge of the child's whereabouts.

1. The foster caregiver will call the Sojourners Care Network immediately for instructions. The local law enforcement will not be contacted until a Sojourners Care Network staff member has been notified and instructs the foster caregiver to call.
2. The AWOL child must be reported to law enforcement by the foster caregiver when instructed by the Sojourners Care Network staff member. The following information should be given:
 - a. Child's name
 - b. Child's social security number
 - c. Child's physical description and description of clothes
 - d. Time of AWOL
 - e. Sojourners Care Network phone number (1-800-237-5277) and Sojourners staff member name
 - f. Agency with custody
3. Sojourners Care Network will notify the child's primary family, if applicable. Sojourners will also notify the custodial agency.
4. When and if the child returns, all parties previously contacted will be notified of the child's return.
5. The foster caregiver and Sojourners Care Network staff member will document the AWOL incident according to the Major and Unusual Incident (MUI) procedure.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #21**

**Home Visits by Sojourners Care Network Workers
5101:2-5-36(Q)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Home Visit protocols for Sojourners Care Network Supportive Services Team member.

Policy:

Supporting the needs of our young people in care, along with supporting our caregivers is our primary role as an organization. The high level of support we demand requires our Supportive Services Team member to spend a great deal of time in the caregiver's home. Outlined below are the requirements for monthly contact with all young people in care:

- A. Each Supportive Services Team member must have at least one contact per week with each foster caregiver where children they serve are placed;
- B. Two contacts per month must be in the caregiver's home;
- C. At one of the monthly home visits, a Safety Audit & a Visitation Form (SCN-VF-357-18) must be completed;
- D. In addition to the Safety Audit the following areas should be considered at all home visits:
 1. Observe the child's natural environment
 2. Ensure all surroundings are safe and kept in an orderly manner
 3. Discuss primary family issues
 4. Observe child's health status
 5. Discuss behavior management issues
 6. Assess social development
 7. Assess attachment issues

All contacts shall be documented, in the event the Supportive Services Team member has concerns with any of the above mentioned areas the Supportive Services Team member will discuss the issues with the caregiver and document the discussion for the ODJFS Administrator to review. All home visits are reviewed and processed at weekly supervision meetings.

****In the event of a report of possible rule violations and/or the implementation of a Corrective Action Plan unannounced visitations to a foster home may be authorized by the ODJFS Agency Administrator.**

**Originated: 3-6-99
Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 9-14-05
Revised: 6-1-16**

FF/Tx Policy #21



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #22**

**Children's Rights
5101:2-5-35**

Purpose:

To articulate the rights of children in foster care.

Policy:

The following are the identified rights of youth in foster care, as defined by the Ohio Administrative Code:

- The RIGHT to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or to abstain from the practice of religion.
- The RIGHT to reasonable enjoyment of privacy.
- The RIGHT to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made affecting his life.
- The RIGHT to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support, and supervision.
- The RIGHT to be free from physical abuse and inhumane treatment.
- The RIGHT to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation.
- The RIGHT to receive adequate and appropriate medical care.
- The RIGHT to receive adequate and appropriate food, clothing, and housing.
- The RIGHT to his own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service or case plan.
- The RIGHT to live in clean, safe surroundings.
- The RIGHT to participate in an appropriate educational program.
- The RIGHT to communicate with family, friends and "significant others" from whom he is living apart, in accordance with the child's service or case plan.
- The RIGHT to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself and to others.

In the event restrictions are placed upon a child's rights for more than two (2) hours, Sojourners Care Network shall:

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Revised: 5-30-2012
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #22

- Inform the child and the child's custodian of the conditions of and the reasons for the restriction of rights;
- Place a written report summarizing the conditions of and reasons for the restriction of the child's rights in that child's record maintained pursuant to rule 5101:2-5-10 of the Administrative Code;
- When a restriction of a child's rights affects another individual, inform the individual, as appropriate, of the conditions of and reasons for the action;
- Document review of this decision at least weekly. Any such restriction shall be included in the service plan and approved by the child's custodian.

In addition, Sojourners Care Network affirms the following Foster Child Bill of Rights, as identified by the National Foster Parent Association.

EVERY CHILD IN FOSTER CARE HAS THE INHERENT RIGHT:

Article I

...to be cherished by a family of his own, either his family helped by readily available services and supports to resume his care, or an adoptive family or, by plan, a continuing foster family.

Article II

...to be nurtured by foster parents who have been selected to meet his individual needs, and who are provided services and supports, including specialized education, so that they can grow in their ability to enable the child to reach his potentiality.

Article III

...to receive sensitive, continuing help in understanding and accepting the reasons for his own family's inability to take care of him, and in developing confidence in his own self worth.

Article IV

...to receive continuing loving care and respect as a unique human being...a child growing in trust in himself and others.

Article V

...to grow up in freedom and dignity in a neighborhood of people who accept him with understanding, respect and friendship.

Article VI

...to receive help in overcoming deprivation or whatever distortion in his emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth may have resulted from his early experiences.

Article VII

...to receive education, training, and career guidance to prepare for a useful and satisfying life.

Article VIII

...to receive preparation for citizenship and parenthood through interaction with foster parents and other adults who are consistent role models.

Article IX

...to be represented by an attorney-at-law in administrative or judicial proceedings with access to fair hearings and court review of decisions, so that his best interests are safeguarded.

Article X

Originated: 3-1-99

Revised 11-20-08

Revised: 5-30-2012

Revised: 6-1-16

Revised: 12-7-16

....to receive a high quality of child welfare services, including involvement of the natural parents and his own involvement in major decisions that affect his life.

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Revised 11-20-08
Revised: 5-30-2012
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #22



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #23**

**Required Notification by Caregivers to Sojourners Care Network
5101:2-7-14
5101:2-48-12.2**

Purpose:

To identify special incidents that must be reported by caregivers and staff to the agency, the time frames for such reports, and the procedures for completing Major and Unusual Incident (MUI) (SCN-MUI-357-16) documentation.

Policy:

All caregivers and/or staff are to notify the agency of any Major and Unusual Incidents (MUI) upon becoming aware of them. Caregivers and staff members shall inform the Sojourners Administrator, Director of Continuous Quality Improvement or Licensing Specialist of the following events, within the established timeframes. In addition, caregivers and staff shall complete the Major and Unusual Incident Report form to document the event. The timeframes and events are established as follows:

A caregiver shall notify the recommending agency within one (1) hour of the caregiver gaining the knowledge of any of the following circumstances involving a child:

- A serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of a child
- The death of a child
- Unauthorized absence of a child from the home, such as
 - AWOL
 - Removal of a child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency, or attempts at such removal
- Any involvement of a child with law enforcement authorities.
- Any allegations or instances of child abuse or neglect.
- Any threats or attempts at self-injurious behavior.
- The use of physical restraint on a child.
- Any violations of the Children's Right's policy (#22).
- Any medication errors.

A caregiver shall notify the recommending agency within twenty-four (24) hours or the next working day when:

- Any fire or other incident, requiring the services of a fire department or emergency personnel occurs within the home.
- The foster home becomes uninhabitable for any reason.
- Any impending change in the marital status of the caregiver or in the household occupancy of the home, including a change in the number of adults who reside with the parent(s).
- Any serious illness or death in the household.

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Revised: 7-22-09
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #23

- Any charge of any criminal offense brought against the caregiver or any resident of his home. If the charges result in a conviction, the caregiver shall notify the recommending agency within twenty-four hours of the conviction.
- Any resident of the caregiver's home is at least twelve years of age, but less than eighteen years of age, and has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any of the offenses listed in appendix A of OAC 5101:2-7-14, or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult would have constituted such a violation
- The finalization of an adoptive child.
- A change in the number of child household members through birth or kinship, who have not reached the age of majority.
- A physical relocation of the parent(s) home.
- A significant change in the financial status or income of the caregiver(s).

Other Notifications:

- A caregiver shall inform the recommending agency at least four (4) weeks prior to a planned move of the caregiver.
- A caregiver shall inform the recommending agency within thirty (30) days in writing if the caregiver is certified to operate a type B family day care home.

Adoptive caregivers shall comply with this policy involving all adoptive children who has adoptions have not been finalized.

Completed copies of the Major and Unusual Incident report must include signatures of all involved parties, including caregiver(s), staff persons, and agency administration. Reports shall be provided to the custodial agency, and shall be maintained in the child's and/or foster caregiver's binder (as appropriate).



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #24**

Change in Child Placement

Purpose:

To describe practices and procedures concerning changes in the placement of foster children.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network seeks to place a child in the most appropriate foster care home based on the assets and needs of the foster child and the foster caregiver. Sojourners Care Network provides ongoing support to foster caregivers in order to maintain and sustain the placement based on the long-term goal for the foster child. Although Sojourners Care Network seeks to strengthen rather than abandon difficult placements, some placements warrant a change to a new environment.

The following procedures will be followed when a placement change is being considered:

1. The Supportive Services Team member/and or Foster caregiver will notify the Sojourners Administrator of problems/issues occurring with the child and/or foster care home.
2. A focused review by the child's treatment team will be scheduled at the earliest possible time to address issues and decide the best course of action.
3. If the treatment team decides that a placement change is necessary, that is appropriate to his/her age and developmental level. This will be documented in the case notes and treatment plan, as applicable.
4. The Supportive Services Team member will notify the primary family of the placement change.
5. Prior to placing the child in a new foster home, the Supportive Services Team member will review the child's case with the new foster caregivers and obtain their signatures and agreement to accept the responsibilities.
6. The Supportive Services Team member will support the child during the transition between placements through face-to-face contact within five days.
7. The child's custodian must authorize all changes in placement, before any action may proceed.

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Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #24



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #25**

**Water Safety
5101:2-7-12(C)**

Purpose:

Providing requirements for ensuring safety around water.

Policy:

The following requirements are in effect when a foster home has a swimming pool or hot tub on the premises or when a lake, pond, river, quarry or stream is on or in close proximity to the property on which they reside.

1. Each foster caregiver must maintain current certification in CPR.
2. The foster care home will meet state regulations and/or local regulations/standards regarding recreational water facilities.
3. Any water play activity shall be under constant adult supervision.
4. The child's treatment team will determine the need for any additional requirements.
5. Policy Compliance inspection by Sojourners Care Network Representative.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #26**

**Matching Caregivers with Children
5101:2-5-13(A)(12)**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the procedures for matching children with foster caregivers and/or adoptive parent(s).

Policy

Appropriately matching children with caregivers is a critical component of our care. We have procedures that are well thought out and are sensitive to the unique needs of children and the diverse capacities of caregivers. We provide family foster care, specialized treatment foster care, and support potential adoptive placements. We utilize one matching process for all of the children we serve.

Our matching process is focused on matching youth with the caregivers who are best equipped to meet the youth's needs. Sojourners utilizes five (5) criteria to identify the most effective match between a child and caregiver. It is our policy to utilize the following criteria in making any match within our network of care:

- 1. Sojourners Referral Screening Tool-** At the time of referral, the youth's service provider(s) shall complete a comprehensive assessment of the youth's needs. A series of questions and information are gathered from the referring agent and processed through the Sojourners Referral Screening Tool. The assessment is generally used to determine the youth's level of need for foster care, but may also provide valuable information to assist matching potential adoptive caregivers.
- 2. Special Considerations –** The special considerations form may be used when there are unique circumstances (e.g., history of trauma or abuse, special medical needs) that must be taken into consideration for placement. We recognize each child's needs are different and this must be a vital consideration. Also, the child's preference may be considered if the child has the capacity to express a preference.
- 3. Family-Centered / Neighborhood-Based Placement-** We strive to provide the child's family access to their care. We also attempt to maintain continuity in the child's education and community life without compromising their special needs. If we can match a child with a caregiver, and the child does not have to change schools or learn how to navigate a new community we are making their treatment care more natural and sustainable.
- 4. Caregiver Skill Level, Training History, and Placement History-** After we have determined the Level of Care needed, we must evaluate the skill level and experience of the potential caregiver. We rely on our documented placement history information and

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FF/Tx Policy #26

training assessments on each of our caregivers to match the most qualified caregiver with the child in need.

5. **Network Capacity-** We monitor our network capacity constantly to ensure we are staying within our capacity rules, and not creating placement environments that put children or caregivers at risk. Sometimes this criterion decides the match when multiple caregivers are identified for a potential match.

After the criteria are carefully considered, the Sojourners Administrator approves the final decision on the match. Our criteria do not guarantee a successful match, but it does aid in protecting the children we serve, and attempts to provide the greatest opportunity for their care.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #27**

**Sharing Foster Care Homes
5101:2-5-31**

Purpose:

To describe procedures for sharing foster care homes.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network is committed to collaborating with other organizations and agencies to ensure growth and development of children in foster care. On occasion, Sojourners Care Network may share one of its homes with another agency, or Sojourners Care Network may seek to share a foster home, which was recommended for certification by another agency. The process that Sojourners Care Network will use to share homes is as follows:

1. The agency wishing to use the home will obtain a written agreement signed by the recommending agency.
2. The agreement will state how the home is to be used, and that all parties affected by the agreement approve of it.
3. The recommending agency will provide written notification to the foster caregivers and all agencies currently using the home.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #28**

**Grievance Policy
5101:2-48-24**

Purpose:

To outline the process by which a child in care or a caregiver may file a grievance against the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

A child in care or a caregiver may file a grievance against Sojourners at any time they believe their rights have been violated in any way. In the event a child or caregiver wishes to file a grievance the following process will be followed.

1. The child or caregiver will submit a written grievance summary to the Sojourners Director of Communications;
 - a. If the child needs assistance filling out the grievance summary, the Sojourners Director of Communications may assist them.
 - b. In the event the Director of Communications is named against in the grievance, the Sojourners Administrator will appoint another the appropriate staff person to handle the grievance;
2. The Director of Communications shall conduct a face-to-face meeting with the person filing the grievance within three (3) working days of the filing date of the grievance, in order to attempt to resolve the matter and complete a disposition of the grievance. Disposition must occur within thirty (30) days of the reported grievance. The meeting shall include a face-to-face meeting with the child, foster applicant, foster parent(s), adoptive applicant, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families requesting an agency review, the adoptive family caseworker, and the administrator of the PCSA and/or PNA.
3. A written decision, including the reason for the decision, shall be rendered by the administrator of the agency or his/her designee. The decision shall be based upon the evidence presented at the review. A copy of the decision shall be provided to all parties to the agency review within fifteen days of the review.
4. If the grievant is not satisfied with disposition of the grievance after meeting with the Director of Communications, an appeal filing of the grievance will occur;
5. A second meeting will take place within seven (7) working days of the appeal of the grievance;
 - a. The grievant, the Director of Communications, Sojourners Administrator, and any other affected individuals will attend the appeal meeting;

- b. The purpose of the appeal meeting will be to come to resolution on the appeal and reach final disposition on the grievance;
6. If final disposition is not reached during the appeal meeting, the grievant may appeal to the Board of Directors of the Sojourners Care Network;
 - a. A special hearing meeting will be convened by the Board within ten working days of the appeal to the Board;
 - b. All relevant parties to the grievance will be invited to testify in front of the Board
 - c. After hearing all relevant testimony, the Board will meet in closed session and render a proposed resolution;
7. In the event that a grievance is still unresolved within thirty (30) calendar days of filing the initial grievance, the Sojourners Administrator will review the grievance in writing and render a proposed resolution.
7. If the grievant is not satisfied with Board's or Sojourners Administrator's resolution, they may choose to appeal the resolution to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services;
 - a. If the grievant chooses to appeal to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services they may mail all grievance materials to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, PO Box 182709, Columbus, OH 43218-2709;
 - b. Sojourners will provide any and all requested information to the Department during their investigation.

The requirements of 5101:2-33-03 ("Procedure for complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin.") supercede the requirements of this rule when the grievance or complaint involve alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to the foster care or adoption process that involves race, color, or national origin.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy # 29**

Pre-Placement and Ongoing Training

5101:2-5-40

5101:2-5-33

5101:2-5-13(A)(8)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the pre-placement and ongoing training requirements of all foster caregivers in the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

Pre-Placement Training

Sojourners Care Network shall ensure that each person seeking certification successfully completes all pre-placement training required by this rule according to the type of foster home for which certification is sought. Exceptions may be made in compliance with Policy #45 (“Good Cause”) and Policy #78 (“Waiver Policy”). Potential foster and/or adoptive caregivers shall be provided quarterly training calendars by the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator, which provides information on trainings offered by Sojourners Care Network, Regional Training Centers and other foster care agencies in the foster caregiver’s region. The training calendar also provides procedures for registration for participants who wish to attend any of the trainings listed within the training schedule provided. For Sojourners Care Network trainings, participants will need to call the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator to register.

Family Foster Homes

A person seeking certification to operate a family foster home shall complete a minimum of **thirty-six (36) hours** of pre-placement training prior to the agency recommending the home for certification. No pre-placement training shall be counted towards the completion of continuing training required by this policy. The pre-placement training program shall consist of courses in the role of foster caregivers as a part of the care and treatment of foster children. A foster caregiver may earn up to 6 hours of preplacement training completed outside of the classroom, where a trainer is not present, which may include training offered through video presentations, computer programs and/or internet sites per Ohio Revised Code Section 5101:2-5-33 (F)(3)(a)(b). A foster caregiver shall complete all of the courses, which shall address at least all of the following:

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Family Foster Homes
The legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers
Sojourners Care Network policies and procedures regarding foster caregivers
ODJFS requirements for certifying foster homes
The effects placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, their families, and foster caregivers
Foster caregivers' involvement in permanency planning for children and their families
The effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on normal human growth and development
Behavior management techniques
Effects of caregiving on children's families
At least two (2) hours on cultural issues in placement training including cultural diversity training
Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases
Community health and social services available to children and their families
The substance of section 2152.72 of the Revised Code which deals with the information required to be shared with a foster caregiver when a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed in a foster home. A course addressing section 2152.72 of the Revised Code shall be not less than one (1) hour long
A prospective family foster caregiver who will be providing care for a youth expected to remain in foster care until the youth's eighteenth birthday shall be prepared adequately with the appropriate knowledge and skills to understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and provide, under the

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instruction of the recommending agency, such services to the youth as are needed and appropriate and, to the extent possible, coordinate such services with the life skill services required to be provided by rule 5101:2-42-19 of the Administrative Code.
The reasonable and prudent parent standard as described in division (C) of section 5103.162 of the Revised Code.

Treatment (Specialized) Foster Homes

A person seeking certification to operate a family foster home shall complete a minimum of **thirty-six (36) hours** of pre-placement training prior to the agency recommending the home for certification. No pre-placement training shall be counted towards the completion of continuing training required by this policy. The pre-placement training program shall consist of courses in the role of foster caregivers as a part of the care and treatment of foster children. A foster caregiver may earn up to 6 hours of preplacement training completed outside of the classroom, where a trainer is not present, which may include training offered through video presentations, computer programs and/or internet sites per Ohio Revised Code Section 5101:2-5-33 (F)(3)(a)(b). A foster caregiver shall complete all of the courses, which shall address at least all of the following:

Treatment (Specialized) Foster Homes
The legal rights and responsibilities of foster caregivers
Sojourners Care Network policies and procedures regarding foster caregivers
ODJFS requirements for certifying foster homes
The effects placement, separation, and attachment issues have on children, their families, and foster caregivers
Foster caregivers' involvement in permanency planning for children and their families
The effects of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, and substance abuse on normal human growth and development
Behavior management techniques
Effects of caregiving on children's families

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At least three (3) hours on cultural issues in placement training including cultural diversity training
Prevention, recognition, and management of communicable diseases
Community health and social services available to children and their families
The substance of section 2152.72 of the Revised Code which deals with the information required to be shared with a foster caregiver when a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed in a foster home. A course addressing section 2152.72 of the Revised Code shall be not less than one-hour long
A prospective family foster caregiver who will be providing care for a youth expected to remain in foster care until the youth's eighteenth birthday shall be prepared adequately with the appropriate knowledge and skills to understand and address the issues confronting adolescents preparing for independent living, and provide, under the instruction of the recommending agency, such services to the youth as are needed and appropriate and, to the extent possible, coordinate such services with the life skill services required to be provided by rule 5101:2-42-19 of the Administrative Code.
Issues concerning appropriate behavioral intervention techniques, such as de-escalation, self-defense and physical restraint techniques and the appropriate use of such techniques
The reasonable and prudent parent standard as described in division (C) of section 5103.162 of the Revised Code.
Educational advocacy training
Certification in a first aid training program and a child and adult CPR training program

Adoptive Homes

A person seeking certification to become an adoptive home shall complete a minimum of **thirty-six (36) hours** of pre-placement training prior to approval of the homestudy.

Adoptive Homes
The adoption process , including agency policy and procedures, role of the agency, preservice training, homestudy, matching, placement, post-placement services, adoption subsidies, ODJFS requirements for approving adoptive applicants, legal rights and responsibilities of adoptive parents, and openness of adoption.

<p>Child development, including normal child development, predictable stages of development in the adopted child, the impact of earlier separations, the impact of abuse and neglect, and identity and control issues in adolescence.</p>
<p>Attachment and separation, including techniques for supporting a grieving child, developing empathy for the child's past, and promoting attachment and dealing with the unattached child.</p>
<p>Dealing with behavioral challenges, including why behaviors occur, typical behaviors to be expected, and creative parenting and discipline.</p>
<p>Cultural issues (minimum three hours), including defining culture, understanding how one's own culture impacts parenting in general, understanding how one's own culture impacts the adopted child, impact of cultural issues on adoption issues arising post-placement, how adoptive parents can use their knowledge of the child's culture to stimulate attachment, stimulate developmental growth, and to assist the child in identity formation, impact of cross cultural placements on triad members and extended family, diversity issues, issues of racism and discrimination, and overview of the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b) (1/2/06) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d (1/2/06), as it applies to the foster care and adoption process.</p>
<p>Caring for children who have been sexually abused, including dynamics of sexual abuse, impact of sexual abuse on children, and therapeutic parenting methods.</p>
<p>Adoption-related issues, including permanency issues for children, permanency issues for families, talking about adoption with the adopted child, the child's birth family and ongoing contact with significant others, adoption and the extended family, adoption issues at school and in the community, effects of caregiving on children's families, using community resources, and advocating for the adoptive family and child.</p>
<p>Communicable Diseases, including management of communicable diseases.</p>
<p>The substance of section 2152.72 of the Revised Code which deals with the information required to be shared with a foster caregiver when a child who has been adjudicated a delinquent child for the commission of certain violent crimes is placed in a foster home. A course addressing section 2152.72 of the Revised Code shall be not less than one-hour long.</p>

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FF/Tx Policy #29

Ongoing Training

Family Foster Homes

A foster caregiver certified to operate a family foster home shall complete a minimum of **forty (40) hours** of continuing training during each certification period. A continuing training program shall consist of courses that a foster caregiver must complete in accordance with the caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan. The foster caregiver must maintain certification in Adult, Child, and Infant CPR, as well as Basic First Aid. Family Foster caregivers shall be provided quarterly training calendars by the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator, which provides information on trainings offered by Sojourners Care Network, Regional Training Centers and other foster care agencies in the foster caregiver's region. The training calendar also provides procedures for registration for participants who wish to attend any of the trainings listed within the training schedule provided. For Sojourners Care Network trainings, participants will need to call the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator to register.

Treatment Foster Homes

A foster caregiver certified to operate a family foster home shall complete a minimum of **sixty (60) hours** of continuing training during each certification period. A continuing training program shall consist of courses that a foster caregiver must complete in accordance with the caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan. The foster caregiver must maintain certification in Adult, Child, and Infant CPR, as well as Basic First Aid. Treatment Foster caregivers shall be provided quarterly training calendars by the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator, which provides information on trainings offered by Sojourners Care Network, Regional Training Centers and other foster care agencies in the foster caregiver's region. The training calendar also provides procedures for registration for participants who wish to attend any of the trainings listed within the training schedule provided. For Sojourners Care Network trainings, participants will need to call the Licensing Specialist or Training and Compliance Coordinator to register.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #30**

**Discharge Summary
5101:2-5-17
5101:2-5-13(A)(16)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe outline the process discharging a young person in care with the Sojourners Care Network. Also, the policy provides for access to both planned and crisis respite care.

Policy:

The Sojourners Care Network believes a residential change can be traumatic for any young person. The Sojourners Care Network will discharge young people based on the decision of the placing agency. Sojourners foster care staff work cooperatively with the placing agency to reduce the stress a discharge may cause for a young person.

Utilization of respite care shall be only with the approval of the Sojourners Administrator or his or her designee. Respite care providers must be licensed foster caregivers and approved by the custodial agency. Only approved respite care providers shall be utilized.

An approved respite care provider, who is not certified as a foster caregiver or specialized foster caregiver, shall receive at least twelve hours of orientation and training relevant to the children served by the specialized foster care program and have a criminal record check conducted as for a foster caregiver pursuant to rule [5101:2-5-09.1](#) of the Administrative Code prior to providing respite care.

A respite placement care provider shall not provide respite care for children for more than two consecutive weeks unless the provider is certified as a specialized foster caregiver.

When a child is receiving pre-planned direct placement services or is a short term direct placement on a recurring schedule addressed in the case plan, the discharge summary is required at six month intervals or at the conclusion of the service, whichever occurs sooner.

When a discharge is planned the following steps will take place:

1. The Supportive Services Team member will coordinate the logistics of the discharge between the young person, the foster caregiver, and the custodian/placing agency.
2. The Supportive Services Team member will communicate the discharge plan to young person's school.
3. The Supportive Services Team member will complete a Discharge Summary Form (SCN-DIS-357-23) and make it available to the custodian/placing agency. (See Discharge Summary Section below).

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Revised: 10/1/11
Revised: 6-1-16
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FF/Tx Policy #30

4. The Supportive Services Team member will forward any requested information from the young person's SCN Child Record to the custodian/placing agency.

Sojourners Care Network may initiate an emergency discharge for the following reasons:

1. A young person in care is charged or arrested for an offense that puts the foster caregiver, the custodian, or the Sojourners Care Network at significant risk.
2. A significant amount of evidence that a young person in care is in possession of contraband.
3. An emergency court order.
4. An allegation against a foster caregiver.
5. A change in the young person's custodian.
6. A major violation of a Sojourners' policy by a foster caregiver or a young person in care.
7. A young person is AWOL.
8. Any and all situations that place the young person, the foster caregiver, or Sojourners Care Network at substantial risk.

Unless the emergency is ordered by the placing agency/custodian, any and all discharges are at the discretion of the Sojourners Care Network. In the event of an emergency discharge, the Supportive Services Team member will complete the discharge summary form within 48 hours of the emergency discharge.

Discharge Summary Form:

A written discharge summary form will be completed for any young person who will be discharged from any Sojourners foster home. The discharge summary will be completed no earlier than thirty days or no later than thirty days after the date of discharge. One copy of the completed discharge summary will be given to the custodial agency, parent, guardian, or custodian no later than 10 days following the completion of the discharge summary. Another copy of the discharge summary will be kept in the child's record.

When a young person is placed into respite setting from a foster home and the child is expected to return to that foster home after respite has ended, then no discharge summary is required.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #31**

Admission and Intake Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure of admitting and intaking a young person into care.

Policy

Obtaining quality information, careful assessment, and a positive transition into our care are the cornerstones to our admission and intake process. A young person being placed into care is traumatic, and being efficient and sensitive to the incident can ease some of the separation/placement anxiety all young people experience.

Below is a detailed policy description of our admission and intake procedures. These procedures are utilized for all young people, who are placed in our care. Only trained staff completes the following functions.

Admission- Admission begins with a referral. The Sojourners Care Network accepts referrals twenty-four hours a day 365 days per year. Referring agents may refer young people for family foster care or specialized treatment care. After a trained SCN representative completes the referral a level of care assessment is completed and scored to determine the LOC needed. In addition, a Special Considerations form is completed and HB 173 criminal is assessed. Once these steps are completed the foster care management team and/or on-call representatives formulate a potential match utilizing our matching criteria. The potential match/placement plan is presented to the Sojourners Administrator for approval. Only the administrator may give final approval to initiate placement into our network. That approval may be given over the phone as documented in the admitting paperwork.

Upon approval of the placement plan the admission logistics are coordinated with the referring agent. The custodian or legal representative must be available during the admission. The custodian must sign-off on the Individual Child Care Agreement (ICCA) (SCN-ICCA-357-10) at the time of admission. No young person may be admitted into our network without a completed ICCA, without exception.

Intake- During the admission process an intake session is scheduled within 48 hours of the admission. This session may occur face-to-face or via phone. The purpose of the intake session is to further gather social and placement history information (SCN-CII-357-09), to present to the SCN Treatment Team assigned to the care of the individual young person. During the intake interview the Diagnostic Assessment is scheduled with the SCN Treatment Team Leader. Any incomplete referral information or clarifications are also processed during this time. At the end of the intake session a complete set of admission and intake information is filed for the Treatment Team, including the Foster Caregiver, to begin utilizing in the planning and implementation of care.

**Originated: 3-6-99
Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #31

We believe our Admission and Intake process strives to accomplish the following objectives:

- Conducive to the emergent needs of referring agents;
- Gain quality information to make appropriate matches;
- Reduce unneeded information;
- Lessen the emotional anxiety placed on the young person during placement;
- Provide timely and organized information to the Foster Caregiver;
- Prepare the Treatment Team;
- Compliance with SCN and ODJFS rules and policies;
- Ability to make informed decisions regarding Level of Care Needed;
- Provide clear decision making process on how placement are developed and approved.

Our process is timely and responsive, but does not sacrifice the young person or foster caregiver's needs for a smooth transition into care. This process sets up the on-going care, and must empower the entire Treatment Team to meet the multiple needs of the young person.

Originated: 3-6-99
Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #31



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #32**

**Personal Hygiene of Foster Children
5101:2-7-09(N)**

Purpose:

To articulate the standard of personal hygiene of foster children that must be maintained in foster homes.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network foster caregivers shall ensure that foster children in their homes who are not capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs are clean and groomed daily. Clothing and footwear shall be clean, well fitted, seasonal, and appropriate to the children's age and gender identity. Foster caregivers shall provide foster children instruction on good habits of personal care, hygiene, and grooming appropriate to the children's age, sex, race, national origin and need for training. Foster children capable of meeting their own personal hygiene needs shall be provided with adequate personal toiletry supplies appropriate to the child's age, sex, gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, race and national origin.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #33**

**Liability Insurance and Legal Representation of Foster Caregiver
5101:2-5-13(A)8(a)(b)**

Purpose:

To describe the scope of liability insurance and legal representation provided by Sojourners Care Network to foster caregivers.

Policy:

During pre-placement orientation potential foster caregivers will receive the following information:

Foster caregivers are expected to carry hazard and property insurance. Sojourners Care Network does not provide liability insurance and/or compensation to foster caregivers for damages done by children placed in their homes.

In addition, Sojourners Care Network does not provide legal representation, legal fees, counseling or legal advocacy for foster caregivers for matters directly related to the proper performance on their roles.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #34**

**Foster Caregiver Abuse and Neglect
5101:2-5-13(A)8(c)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to explain the process for investigations of abuse and neglect involving a young person living in a foster home. This policy is implemented simultaneously with FCG policy #81 “Rule Violation Investigations of a Foster Caregiver / Staff person.”

Policy:

The foster caregiver will notify Sojourners Care Network within twenty-four hours of any allegations of abuse and neglect. Law enforcement, children services, or any concerned individual who suspects any mistreatment of a child may also notify Sojourners Care Network.

If there is an allegation of abuse or neglect against an SCN foster caregivers involving a young person in care Sojourners will immediately contact the custodial agency of the child. The agency with custody of the child is responsible for investigating the allegations. If the custodial agency is not the county where the child and foster caregiver currently reside, the custodial agency may ask the county where the foster caregiver lives to conduct a courtesy investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the investigating agency will decide to substantiate, indicate or not substantiate the allegations. If the charges are substantiated, the investigating agency may take action independent of Sojourners Care Network. If the charges are found to unsubstantiated, then the investigation will be dropped and the foster caregiver will be cleared of all charges.

If the child is not in the custody of an agency, then Sojourners Care Network will contact the agency in the county where the foster caregiver resides that investigates child abuse and neglect and report the allegation. The child’s custodian will also be informed immediately that allegations have been made and that the proper child maltreatment investigating agency has been contacted.

Sojourners will conduct a rule violation investigation and work with the custodial and/or investigating agency during their investigation. (See Policy #81) Depending on the findings of the maltreatment investigation, Sojourners Care Network will work with the foster caregiver on the corrective plan of action, and if necessary will recommend to ODJFS the revocation or suspension of the foster caregiver’s license.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #35**

Individualized Educational Plan Signature

Purpose:

To outline the role of the FCG in the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) planning process.

Policy:

No Foster Caregiver will serve as a custodial signature on an Individualized Educational Plan unless special circumstances arise and the young person's legal custodian and the Sojourners Administrator of the Sojourners Care Network approve it.

**Originated: 3-1-99
Revised: 2-6-03
Revised: 11-24-03
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #35



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #36**

Foster Caregiver Mileage Reimbursement

Purpose:

To articulate the policy and process for foster caregiver's reimbursement of mileage.

Policy:

Foster caregivers shall provide necessary transportation for young people in their care, and may be reimbursed for certain approved purposes. Transportation costs are reimbursed on a per-mile basis, at the current established rate (\$.35 per mile). Transportation of young people for the following purposes **are** reimbursable:

- Medical Services
- Mental Health Services
- Legal / Court Appointments
- Children's Services Appointments
- Family Visitation

Transportation of young people for the following purposes may be reimbursable, with **prior** written approval by the Sojourners Administrator:

- Employment / Vocational Training
- Educational Services

Foster caregivers must document their mileage on Mileage Reimbursement Form. The date, child's name, purpose of the trip, and before and after the trip odometer readings must be logged on the form. These forms are turned into the Director of Business Operations by the fifth (5th) working day of the month. Reimbursement checks are distributed by the tenth (10th) working day of the month.

Mileage reimbursement sheets not received by the 5th working day of the month following the date of the mileage sheet will not be reimbursed. (e.g., February mileage sheets must be turned in by the 5th working day of March)



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #37**

**Smoke-Free Environment
5101:2-7-12(V)**

Purpose:

To promote and insure a healthy environment for young people in the care of Sojourners and its foster parents.

Policy:

A foster home shall provide a smoke-free environment for foster children. No smoking shall be permitted in the living area of a foster home or in a vehicle used to transport a foster child when a foster child is present.

Smoking may be permitted in the home or vehicles used for transporting foster children only when no foster child is present.

All Sojourners staff members, foster caregivers, and other affiliated persons shall not permit the use of tobacco products by young people in care.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #38**

Food Bank

Purpose:

To outline the requirements for receiving food bank food.

Policy:

Foster caregivers are eligible to order food from the food bank if they met the following requirements each month.

1. Be a licensed Sojourners Care Network foster caregiver.
2. Attend the previous month's foster caregiver training.
3. Have at least one young person placed at their home on the day orders are taken.

Foster caregivers will be informed of the delivery date and time and must pick up their order within two hours of the delivery date. Sojourners Care Network and all who participate in the food bank are not responsible for orders that are not picked up in a timely manner.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #39**

**Substitute Care Provider
5101:2-5-13 (A) (16) (d)**

Purpose:

To ensure appropriate substitute care is provided to young people in foster care.

Policy:

It is anticipated that foster caregivers will have occasions arise from time to time where they require other adults to supervise their foster children for a short period of time. All adults that foster caregivers ask to provide substitute care must be recognized as Substitute Care Providers with Sojourners Care Network. Any unapproved use of Substitute Care Providers is in violation of agency policy.

In order to apply for a Substitute Care Provider, the identified adult(s) must successfully complete the Substitute Care Provider form (SCN-SCP-357-25) and following requirements:

- Foster Caregiver Name(s)
- Substitute Caregiver Name(s) and Address
- Substitute Caregiver Home and Work Phone Numbers
- Substitute Caregiver Social Security and Driver's License Numbers
- Substitute Caregivers Proof of Insurance
- Substitute Caregiver Background Check (Substitute Caregiver responsible for fees)
- Directions to Substitute Caregiver Home

Required Trainings:

- Adult, Child, and Infant CPR
- Basic First Aid

Additionally, if the substitute care provision occurs at locations other than the foster caregiver home, the substitute care location must also successfully pass the following:

- Fire Inspection
- Safety Audit

Foster Caregiver Responsibilities:

- Dissemination of foster care rules and policies to substitute caregivers.
- Providing information about the specific needs of children placed in the home.
- Ensuring rule compliance related to the children and home during substitute care.
- Payment of substitute care provider (where applicable).

The Substitute Care Provider form, training, and all responsibilities must be satisfied before young people can be placed in substitute care.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #40**

**Fire Inspections
5101:2-7-02(W)(X)
5101:2-5-20 (K)(9)**

Purpose:

To describe the procedures for obtaining a fire inspection report for prospective and current foster caregivers.

Policy:

A foster caregiver or applicant shall obtain an approved inspection by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal's office certifying that the foster home is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of foster children. The approval must have occurred within Twelve (12) months prior to the initial recommendation for certification. The inspection must be completed using the ODJFS Form 1200 ("Fire Inspection Report For Homes or Residential Facilities Certified/Approved by ODJFS" rev. 2/2015).

Foster caregivers shall obtain additional fire inspections at the request of the agency, or following a significant renovation to the foster home.

Foster caregivers or applicants should contact their local fire department or state fire marshal to arrange a fire inspection. To locate the proper fire inspector in your area, please contact the state fire marshal's office at (614) 752-5460.

Sojourners shall reimburse the cost of fire inspection, not to exceed fifty (\$50) dollars. The foster caregiver must submit a receipt to the agency within thirty (30) days of the fire inspection to receive reimbursement.

**Originated: 3-6-03
Revised 5-19-09
Revised: 10-1-11
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #40



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #41**

**Notification to Child Fatality Review Board
5101:2-5-13(A) 20**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures of reporting information to the Child Fatality Review Board.

Policy:

In the tragic event that a child in the care of the Sojourners Care Network dies, the following procedures will immediately be enacted:

- A. The agency administrator will immediately go to the location of the young person;
- B. The Agency administrator will take MUI documented report from all parties involved in the event;
- C. The Agency administrator will communicate all information known to the custodian/placing agency;
- D. The Agency will coordinate any communication needed with law enforcement and/or emergency services;
- E. The Agency administrator will provide all written documentation and verbal information to the Child Fatality Review Board within 24 hours of notification of the incident;
- F. **No Sojourners Care Network staff or the Agency Administrator will share any information with anyone except the above mentioned parties, this includes sharing no information with any media sources;**
- G. The Sojourners Care Network will ensure the foster caregivers and their families; along with any Sojourners staff have access to crisis grief counseling services.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #42**

**Criminal Offense Notification
5101:2-7-14(G)**

Purpose:

To ensure all foster caregivers notify the Sojourners Care Network in writing if a person living in their home who is at least twelve years old, but under eighteen years old has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any criminal offense or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child.

Policy:

It is the policy of the Sojourners Care Network that it is the responsibility of SCN foster caregivers and prospective foster caregivers to immediately report **any** young person who resides in the home and is at least twelve, but under eighteen years old, has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any of the offenses listed in Appendix A of Rule 5101:2-7-14 of the Administrative Code or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that is committed by an adult would constitute one of those offenses. The foster caregiver must notify SCN in writing within twenty-four hours.

Failure to report any offense within twenty-four hours may result any revocation of the foster caregiver's license. Upon the event, the Sojourners Care Network receives such information that has not been reported by the foster caregiver, the Sojourners Care Network will immediately report un-reported information to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services (ODJFS) and will recommend to ODJFS to deny the foster care certificate to operate a foster home.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #43**

**Changes in Household Occupancy, Marital Status, and Address
5101:2-5-30**

Purpose:

To outline the procedures for reporting changes in household occupancy, marital status, and address of foster home.

Policy:

In compliance with agency policy #23 (“Required Notification by Foster Caregiver to Sojourners Care Network”), foster caregivers must report changes in household occupancy, marital status, and address of the foster home to the agency within twenty-four (24) hours.

Household Occupancy / Marital Status

A foster caregiver shall notify the recommending agency **within twenty-four (24) hours** of any impending change in the marital status of the foster caregiver or in the occupancy of the home.

- Upon notification of any change in household occupancy of a foster home or a change in marital status of a foster caregiver, Sojourners shall evaluate the change within *thirty (30) days* of the date of the change, or within *thirty (30) days* of the agency’s receipt of notification to determine if the foster caregiver is capable of providing continued care for foster children or to determine that new household occupants meet any applicable requirements of the Ohio Administrative Code.
- If the change is a new resident in the foster home, an ODJFS Form 1653, “Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and All Household Members” shall be completed for that individual documenting they are free from any physical, emotional or mental condition which would endanger children or seriously impair the ability of the household member to care for the child placed in the home within *ninety (90) days* of the date the individual became a household member. If Sojourners was not notified of the new household member in accordance with rule 5101:2-7-14 of the Administrative Code, the ODJFS Form 1653 shall be dated within *ninety (90) days* of the date the agency became aware of the new household member.
- If a new occupant of a foster home is a person subject to a criminal records check, a criminal records check shall be conducted within *ten (10) working days* of the date the person became a household member. If the agency was not notified of the new household member in accordance with rule 5101:2-7-14 of the Administrative Code, the criminal records checks shall be conducted within ten

(10) working days of the date the agency became aware of the new household member.

- Upon household changes, Sojourners shall review the new circumstances and, if necessary, re-determine the specific number, age, and gender of children to be placed with the foster caregiver taking into consideration the new occupant(s) of the foster home. Sojourners will amend the homestudy and shall address sleeping arrangements, beds and bedrooms, and shall evaluate whether the foster family remains in compliance with all applicable requirements within *thirty (30) days* of notification of the change. The amendment shall be completed in the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS).
- The new adult household member shall provide the name of any agency they have applied to or had a homestudy approved for foster care or adoption, or any organization they have worked with in providing care and supervision of children. The new adult household member shall complete a written and signed release of information so that any such reference may be contacted.
- Sojourners will complete an alleged perpetrator search of abuse and neglect report history through SACWIS within ten (10) working days of the date the person becomes a household member to determine the continued suitability of the foster family. A report with the results of the search shall be placed in the foster caregiver record.
- Sojourners will request a check of the child abuse and neglect registry of any other state the new adult household member has resided in for the five years immediately prior to the date of the criminal records check for the new household member, as required by division (A) of section 2151.86 of the Revised Code.
- If the new occupant is the spouse of the foster caregiver or a co-parent who is to be added to the foster home certificate and the person has not previously completed the pre-placement training, Sojourners shall ensure that the co-person or spouse completes the preplacement pursuant rule 5101:2-5-33 of the Administrative Code no later than one hundred eighty (180) days after becoming a household member. The co-parent or spouse shall not be added to the foster care certificate until the training has been completed. Sojourners will contact all adult children of the new co-parent or spouse for a reference. If the adult children are unable or unwilling to provide a reference this shall be assessed during the amendment process and documented in the amendment.

Change of Address

A foster caregiver shall inform the recommending agency at least **four weeks prior** to a planned move of the foster caregiver.

Upon notification of a change of address of a foster home, Sojourners shall, within *ten (10) working days* after the notification or the change of address, conduct a safety audit on the ODJFS 1348 (rev. 12/2014) of the foster caregiver's new residence. Sojourners shall also require the foster caregiver to have completed a fire safety inspection on the

JFS 01200 “Fire Inspection Report For Residential Facilities Certified by ODJFS” (rev. 2/2015) or other form used for a local or state fire inspection.

The fire safety inspection shall be requested prior to or within thirty (30) days of the date of change of address. If Sojourners was not notified of the change of address pursuant to code 5101:2-7-14 of the Administrative Code, then the fire safety inspection shall be requested within thirty (30) days of the date Sojourners became aware of the change of address. The fire safety inspection shall be conducted prior to or within *ninety (90) days* of the change of address certifying that the foster caregiver’s new residence is free from conditions hazardous to the safety of foster children.

If Sojourners was not notified of the change of address pursuant to rule 5101:2-7-14 of the Administrative Code, then the fire safety inspection shall be conducted within ninety (90) days of the date the agency became aware of the change of address. The fire safety inspection shall be conducted by a state certified fire safety inspector or the state fire marshal’s office.

Within *thirty (30) days*, Sojourners shall review the foster caregiver’s new living situation and re-determine the specific number, age, and sex of children to be placed with the foster caregiver taking into consideration the physical facilities of the foster caregiver’s new residence.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #44**

New and Revised Policies

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for review and approval of agency policies by the Sojourners Board of Directors. Additionally, this policy defines the procedure for submitting new and revised foster caregiver policies to the ODJFS licensing specialist.

Policy:

All new and revised foster care, personnel, and administrative policies will be approved by the Sojourners Board of Directors. The Co-Executive Director of Sojourners will send new and revised versions of foster caregiver, personnel, and relevant administrative policies to the ODJFS licensing specialist within thirty (30) working days of Sojourners Board of Directors approval. Approved policies will be distributed to all foster caregivers and staff by the Director of Foster Care.

Annual Policy Review

All of the foster care policies and relevant administrative and personnel policies will be reviewed by the Sojourners Board of Directors at the Annual Board of Directors Meeting held every June. All board members will receive a packet of the policies that they will have to review and approve. The Board Chair will sign an approval letter documenting this has been completed. The policy review will also be documented in the minutes of the meeting. Documentation will be filed for submission with license renewal.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #45**

**Good Cause
5101:2-5-13(A)9**

Purpose:

To outline agency policy regarding good cause for a foster caregiver's failure to complete the continuing training requirements.

Policy:

Each foster caregiver is required complete the specified amount of training identified by the license(s), identified in agency policy #29 ("Pre-placement and Ongoing Training"). A foster caregiver shall not be recertified if they have not completed the required number of training hours during their licensure period, unless they can present documented "Good Cause" for their failure to complete the requirement. "Good Cause" must be reviewed and approved by the Sojourners Administrator.

1. Significant illness or injury to the foster caregiver or their immediate family, which prohibits their attendance of training for an extended period of time.
2. Lack of available and accessible training courses.
3. Death of an immediate family member.
4. Catastrophic loss of personal property (e.g., home, automobile)

Procedure:

Upon amelioration of the circumstances resulting in "Good Cause", the foster caregiver(s) are required to complete the assigned number of training hours.

1. In conjunction with the agency, the foster caregivers and Licensing Coordinator and/or the Sojourners Administrator shall develop a corrective action plan to complete the training requirement.
2. The Foster Caregivers shall execute the Corrective Action Plan by completing the training episodes as required.
3. The corrective action plan must be completed within ninety (90) days of license expiration. Failure to complete the training requirement shall result in revocation of licensure. Documentation of all completed training will be filed in the foster caregiver's binder.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #46**

**Training from Other Agencies, Video Training, and Internet Training
5101:2-5-33**

Purpose:

To outline the procedure for participating in alternative training opportunities, including trainings at other locations (foster care networks, regional training centers, etc...) and electronic trainings (video presentations, internet locations, etc...).

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network encourages foster caregivers to attend trainings offered through a variety of sources, in accordance with their written needs assessment and continuing training plan. The Licensing Specialist and/or Training and Compliance Coordinator may assist with registration to trainings outside of Sojourners Continuing Training Program. All trainings must be in compliance with this policy, with the caregiver's written needs assessment and continuing training plan, and with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services approved training protocols.

Alternative Training Options

Conducting Training Courses / Foster Parent Mentor

A foster caregiver may complete up to twenty (20%) percent of his or her continuing training requirements by teaching one or more training classes, or by providing mentoring services to other foster caregivers. The total number of training credit hours for conducting training courses and foster parent mentor combined, may not exceed twenty (20%) percent of continuing training requirement during the recertification period. In order to qualify for conducting training courses or foster parent mentor, the caregiver(s) must:

- Have at least two (2) years experience as a certified foster caregiver.
- Have had at least two (2) child placements in their foster home.
- Be a currently certified foster home.
- Not be under a corrective action plan by a recommending agency.
- Not be under investigation for a violation of state statute or rule by a recommending agency or ODJFS.

Providing foster parent mentoring is defined as:

- Assisting foster caregivers with information that will encourage positive communication between foster caregivers and human service agencies.
- Offering foster caregivers possible solutions to problems that may occur while caring for a child in placement.
- Assisting and guiding recently licensed foster caregivers in day to day activities while caring for a child in placement.

- Offering to assist foster caregivers in utilizing resources within their community.
- Encouraging recently licensed foster caregivers to attend training sessions in order to maintain their current license.

Video Presentations and Other Digital Resources

Video presentations or other digital resources (such as approved internet trainings or computer programs) may be used as a tool to meet pre-placement or continuing foster caregiver training requirements. Video presentations or other digital resources may not exceed more than one-third (1/3) of the foster caregiver's training requirements. Video presentations or other digital resources may be used if any of the following requirements are met.

- A qualified trainer is present during the training session to respond to questions.
- The video presentation is part of a self-directed learning program approved by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)
- It is approved as part of Sojourners Care Network's training proposal and transfer of learning components (pre-test, post-test, follow-up discussions) are utilized as part of the training

Combined, all Alternative Training Options (including conducting training courses, foster parent mentoring, video presentations, and other digital resources) may not exceed more than one-third (1/3) of the foster caregiver's training requirements. In addition, alternative training options may not be used to satisfy the requirements for Adult, Child, and Infant CPR, Basic First Aid, or Non-Violent Restraint techniques.

Documentation of Training

Sojourners Care Network is required to maintain a record of all foster caregiver pre-service and ongoing training experiences. Any certificates or approved documentation of training experiences must be provided to Sojourners Care Network in order to count towards the training requirements.

Reimbursement for Trainings

In accordance with Sojourners Care Network Policy #6 ("Foster Caregiver Reimbursement and Stipend Payments"), caregivers are not reimbursed for electronic training experiences (including video presentations, and other digital resources).



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #47**

Training Notification and Registration

5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(d)

5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(e)

Purpose

To describe the procedures for notifying agencies and foster caregivers of courses offered by the training program.

Policy

The Training and Compliance Coordinator shall provide foster caregivers sufficient awareness of available trainings through Sojourners Care Network, as well as other training centers. Each quarter, the Training and Compliance Coordinator shall distribute the “Foster Care Training Calendar” to foster caregivers, providing information about trainings available throughout the region served. In addition, the monthly newsletter (“Sojo Family News”) shall contain the dates of upcoming monthly trainings and shall be provided to foster caregivers, as well as affiliated agencies.

Foster caregivers shall contact the Training & Compliance Coordinator to register for all Sojourners Care Network monthly trainings. In addition, foster caregivers may contact the Training & Compliance Coordinator for assistance in registering for external trainings (where applicable). Foster caregivers from other agencies may register and attend Sojourners Care Network monthly trainings.

**Originated: 9-25-03
Revised: 9-24-08
Revised: 3-12-15
Revised: 6-1-16**

FF/Tx Policy #47



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #48**

**Maintenance of Training Records
5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(f)**

Purpose:

To describe the procedures for maintaining training records, tracking attendance at the training by course offering and by foster caregiver, including notification to the agency of foster caregiver attendance.

Policy:

In accordance with policy #77 (“Successful Completion of Training Courses”), participants shall receive a certificate of completion for successfully completed training courses. In addition, training certificates shall be maintained in the foster caregiver record. Foster caregivers who attend trainings through other agencies must submit a copy of the training certificate to the Training and Compliance Coordinator. Training and Compliance Coordinator shall record all verifiable training instances on the training log contained within the foster caregiver record.

During each training offered by Sojourners Care Network, the Training and Compliance Coordinator shall provide a registration sheet at the beginning of training for foster caregivers to record their attendance. Participants must sign the registration sheet at the beginning of training in order to receive credit for the training session. The Training and Compliance Coordinator shall maintain a record of all training registrations.

Successful training participants from agencies other than Sojourners Care Network shall receive a copy of their training certificate via mail. In addition, a copy of each certificate shall be provided to the recommending agency of the training participant.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #49**

Special Considerations

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the special circumstances when a child may require a higher level of care and the Sojourners Care Network documentation of those circumstances.

Policy:

At the time of admission each young person will be assigned a level of care that will determine the types of services required and the per diem rates designated for that child. There are some circumstances that will be given special consideration when determining the level of care for a young person.

Those circumstances that will receive special considerations are:

- Cultural or Religious Considerations
- Previous Abuse or Trauma
- Language Barriers
- Special Nutritional Needs
- Special Medical Needs
- Previous Placement / Adoption Factors
- Extreme Transportation Needs
- Special Vocational Needs
- Unique Treatment needs
- Sibling Issues
- Developmental Disability
- Extreme Family Medical Issues

If a young person has one or more of these circumstances his/her level of care may significantly increase. A higher level of care may be designated despite the child's score on the Level of Care Tool.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #50**

**Foster Caregiver Training Needs Assessments and Continuing Training Plans
5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(A)
5101:2-5-33 (G)**

Purpose

To outline the process by which training needs of foster caregivers will be assessed, and to determine the appropriate training courses for caregivers.

Policy

No later than **thirty (30) days** of a foster caregiver's certification period, an agency representative shall develop and implement a written needs assessment and continuing training plan for each foster caregiver affiliated with the agency. Each needs assessment and continuing training plan shall satisfy all of the following requirements:

1. Be effective for the two-year period the foster caregiver's certificate is in effect.
2. Be appropriate for the type of foster home the foster caregiver operates, and include training for the caregiver that relates to providing independent living services, as defined in section 2151.81 of the Revised Code, to a child placed as provided in division (B) (2) of section 2151.353 of the Revised Code.
3. Require the foster caregiver to successfully complete the courses the agency considers appropriate.
4. Include criteria the agency is to use to determine whether the foster caregiver has successfully completed the courses.
5. Guarantee that the courses the foster caregiver is required to complete are available to the foster caregiver at reasonable times and places.
6. Specify the number of hours of continuing training, if any, the foster caregiver may complete by teaching one or more training classes to other foster caregivers or by providing mentoring or coaching services to other foster caregivers as referenced in this rule.
7. Specify the number of hours of continuing training, if any, the foster caregiver may complete by distance learning and self-directed learning.
8. For a family foster caregiver or a specialized foster caregiver, specify whether the agency will waive any of the hours of continuing training the foster caregiver is required by paragraph (C) of this rule to complete during each certification period if the foster caregiver satisfies the conditions for the agency to issue a waiver. If the agency will issue a waiver, the agency shall state in the needs assessment and continuing training plan the number of hours of continuing training, not to exceed eight during each certification period, that the agency will waive.

Sojourners Care Network shall use the documentation approved by the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP).



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #51**

**Foster Caregiver Training Course Evaluation / Evaluation of Training Program
5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(b)
5101:2-5-13(A)(18)**

Purpose

To outline the process of evaluation of individual training courses and learning activities, as well as the agency's training program.

Policy

At the conclusion of each Sojourners Care Network training session, foster caregivers shall complete the Training Evaluation (SCN-TE-357-38) form and submit it to the Training and Compliance Coordinator. The evaluation shall review the method, content, benefits, and format of the training session.

In compliance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-13(A)(18), Sojourners Care Network shall conduct an annual evaluation of the foster care program, which shall include a review of the training program. Information from the individual training and program evaluations shall be reviewed by the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and the Sojourners Administrator, in order to guide future training courses and programs.

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Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #51



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #52**

**Selection and Evaluation of Trainers
5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(c)**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the application, selection and evaluation process for trainers. In addition, this policy shall outline the procedures for payment of trainers.

Policy

The Licensing Specialist/Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and Training and Compliance Coordinator shall identify and select trainers from within and beyond Sojourners Care Network. All prospective trainers shall submit relevant training materials, a training outline, and training credentials prior to being approved to provide training. The Licensing Specialist/Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and Training and Compliance Coordinator shall review all materials to ensure the trainer meets the expectations of Sojourners Care Network. Trainers will be selected based on their knowledge, skills, and experience with the training topic(s).

Upon approval by the Licensing Specialist/Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and Training and Compliance Coordinator, Sojourners Care Network shall initiate a contractual agreement (where applicable) with the trainer, establishing an agreement for payment and services.

In accordance with policy #51 ("Foster Caregiver Training Course Evaluation / Evaluation of Training Program"), training participants shall complete the Training Evaluation (SCN-TE-357-38) form and submit it to the Licensing Specialist/Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and/or Training and Compliance Coordinator. Training evaluations shall be reviewed and maintained by the Licensing Specialist/Director of Continuous Quality Improvement and/or Training and Compliance Coordinator, in order to determine the trainer's effectiveness.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #53**

Individualized Child Care Agreement (ICCA)

Purpose:

To ensure that Sojourners Care Network has a complete and accurate record of each young person in care.

Policy:

An ICCA will be completed for each young person by the responsible entity at the time of admission. The ICCA must be signed by the custodian and or parent and the entity responsible for payment (these could be the same) at the time of admission. **No young person will be admitted without the completed and signed ICCA.**

Completed and signed ICCA's will be submitted to an Outreach Services team member who will assign an ICCA Code. The Outreach Services team member will then submit the signature page of the ICCA to the Director of Operations who will attach it to the placing agency's Annual Contract. The original will be filed in the child's binder and a copy will be sent to the Foster Caregiver, the Custodian, and the entity responsible for payment.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #54**

House Bill 173 Form

Purpose:

To ensure that Sojourners Care Network is in compliance with requirements set forth in Ohio Revised Code 2152.72 and House Bill 173. Additionally, to ensure that foster caregivers receive all relevant information on young people placed in their homes.

Policy:

At the time of admission, a House Bill 173 form (SCN-HB173-357-06) must be completed for each young person. Unless the child's record has been sealed, a written report must be documented on the HB-173 form for any young person being placed into care that has been adjudicated, has charges filed or has a disposition pending for any of the following charges:

- Aggravated Murder
- Murder
- Voluntary Manslaughter
- Involuntary Manslaughter
- Felonious Assault
- Aggravated Assault
- Assault
- Rape
- Sexual Battery
- Gross Sexual Imposition
- Conspiracy involving an attempt to commit aggravated murder or murder
- Any other offense that would be a felony if committed as an adult, and the child, upon committing the offense was found to be using or in possession of a firearm.

The written description must include all of the known acts committed by the young person that resulted in the child being adjudicated delinquent and the disposition made by the court. The Sojourners staff member must also provide a written description of any other violent acts the young person has committed. The foster caregiver will be given a verbal description of the information regarding the youth when the placement plan is formed. The HB-173 form will be given to the foster parent to inform them about the acts committed by the young person. The foster caregiver must review this information and sign off on the HB 173 form prior to placement. It is the responsibility of the custodial / placing agency to provide this information to the juvenile court and schools in the county of placement.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #55**

Safety Plans

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for creating a safety plan for a young person or a foster caregiver.

Policy:

A safety plan will be created when it is necessary for the physical or/and emotional safety of a young person or there has been a possible rule violation by a foster caregiver that is under investigation. The staff member(s) directly involved with the young person or foster caregiver will meet with all parties involved. The staff member must document the situation or unsafe condition and interview any collateral contacts relevant to the situation. The staff member must bring written documentation to the Sojourners Administrator to discuss appropriate ways to correct the unsafe condition and/or an appropriate corrective action plan.

Based on input from the Sojourners Administrator and possibly input from the treatment team, the staff member will develop a safety plan that will be reviewed by all parties involved. If the parties agree with the safety plan they will sign the plan which signifies that they agree to implement the plan. If a party does not agree with the conditions set forth in the plan they do not have to sign the plan and revisions can be made if possible.

Each safety plan will be implemented pursuant to the conditions set forth in it. If there has been a foster caregiver rules violation than the safety plan will be used to develop a corrective action plan. A time frame will be established for the implementation and for the execution of each safety plan. The safety plan will be reviewed for effectiveness at the end of the time periods specified in the plan. All parties included in the safety plan will be included in the review.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #56**

**Visitation Form
5101-2-5-36(Q)**

Purpose:

To outline the professional Treatment Team Leader and Supportive Services Team member requirements for regular contact with a special or exceptional needs young person.

Policy:

The professional Treatment Team Leader and the Supportive Services Team member will have at least weekly contact, and face to face meetings at least every two weeks with each special or exceptional needs child placed in a foster home. At least one of the face to face contacts each month will take place in the treatment foster home. The professional Treatment Team Leader will document all contacts with the young person on a Counseling Progress Note (PN6fm.doc). The other treatment staff will document all contacts on the Sojourners Visitation Form (SCN-VF-357-18). All documentation will be kept in the young person's record and in the treatment team leader's files.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #57**

**Monthly Treatment Team Invitation Policy
5101:2-5-36(C)(4)**

Purpose:

All treatment team members should be notified in advance of each treatment team meeting and invited to participate.

Policy:

At the end of each wraparound meeting the next treatment team meeting date will be set. The date will be documented on the wraparound form that is completed by the Supportive Services Team member. It is the responsibility of the Supportive Services Team member to inform all treatment team members of the next meeting. The Supportive Services Team member will have the option of mailing, faxing, emailing, phoning an invitation to treatment team members or they may contact the team members in person. All contacts to inform the treatment team if the meeting will be documented on the Treatment Team Meeting Invitation (SCN-TTI-357-17). Documentation of the invitation and contacts shall be maintained in the young person's record.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #58**

**Staff Training
5101:2-5-36(L)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that treatment staff has adequate training in treatment foster care issues and the mission of the agency.

Policy:

Treatment Staff Training:

All treatment staff members are required to do at least fifteen (15) hours of training per year. The trainings that the treatment staff attend must pertain to specific treatment foster care issues as well as the mission of the agency. Treatment staff will provide documentation of completion of each training course to the Director of Operations to be filed in their employee record. Documentation also needs to be provided to the Training and Compliance Coordinator to be recorded and filed in a Treatment Staff Training Binder. New treatment staff must complete pre-placement training within 180 days from their hire date.

In-Service Training:

All staff members who are designated as part of the treatment staff or administrative/support staff for treatment program are required to complete and in-service training on Sojourners Care Network admission procedures and the treatment program. Those staff persons who will be trained include but are not limited to:

- Sojourners Administrator
- Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist
- Director of Operations
- All Supportive Services Team member
- Training and Compliance Coordinator
- Administrative/Supportive Staff (Office Managers)
- Treatment Team Leaders

Professional Treatment Staff:

All professional treatment staff under contract with Sojourners Care Network will complete at least fifteen hours per year of training specific to treatment foster care issues and the mission of the agency. Professional treatment staff will provide documentation of each training course, to the Training and Compliance Coordinator to be filed in the professional treatment staff training binder. Professional treatment staff will also be required to complete the training requirements necessary to maintain their credentials.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #59**

**Service Plan
5101:2-5-36(C)(D)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the service plans that will be completed for each young person with special or exceptional needs.

Policy:

Each young person with special or exceptional needs placed with Sojourners Care Network will be assigned to a treatment team. The treatment team will complete a service plan for each young person no later than thirty days of placement. The service plan shall be reviewed and revised, if necessary, at least once every ninety (90) days thereafter. The Supportive Services Team member is responsible to do all coordination of the service plan. All the treatment team members, including the young person and the foster caregiver will sign the service plan. Each service plan will be reviewed by Sojourners Administrator and approved by the Clinical Supervisor.

The service plan shall include:

1. The young person's treatment goals, clinical and/or rehabilitative services and other necessary interventions for the child and his family.
2. The method by which the goals, rehabilitative services and other necessary interventions will be attained and the methods by which progress will be evaluated.
3. Who will be responsible for implementing the treatment strategies or necessary interventions.
4. The criteria for the child to meet for the child's reunification with his or her parent(s)/family or guardian or the projected post-treatment setting into which the child will be placed upon attainment of the treatment goals.
5. The projected length of the young person's stay in treatment foster care.
6. The young person's permanency plan for family reunification, adoption, independent living or planned permanent living arrangement, specified in the custodial agency's case plan, and how this plan will be attained.
7. Services to be provided or arranged for the young person after discharge from the treatment foster care program.
8. Completion of an individualized respite plan.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #60**

Maintenance of Records and Confidentiality

5101:2-5-13(A)(19)

5101:2-5-13(A)(20)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the maintenance, storage, and disposal of records, including youth, foster caregiver, and adoptive parent records. Additionally, this policy delineates which staff members have access to the records and the procedures for obtaining and releasing information regarding a young person in care or a foster caregiver.

Policy:

All foster caregiver records and child records will be maintained and stored in the foster care office at 605 West Main Street, McArthur. All records will be stored behind two locked doors, the door to the record room and the lock to the closet where all the files are stored. The Sojourners Administrator, Administrative Assistants, Co-Executive Directors, Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist, Training and Compliance Coordinator and the Business Manager are the only staff members who have a key to access the file room. During office hours the Supportive Services Team members and Treatment Team Leader have access to the child records as well. All paperwork to be filed in the foster caregiver and child records is kept in the file closet behind two locked doors as well. The only staff members who have access to the foster caregiver records are the Sojourners Administrator, Co-Executive Directors and the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist.

Closed records are kept in locked filing cabinets for two years in the locked file room. After two years those records are moved into a locked storage room at 605 1/2 West Main Street. The only staff members who have access to the locked storage room are the Business Manager and the Co-Executive Directors. After 5 years, the files are shredded by the Business Manager.

Caregivers or parents who would like access to information in their own file must submit a request to the Sojourners Administrator. The Sojourners Administrator will provide all information requested to the foster caregiver in a timely manner. Any information shared to an outside party has to be done so in accordance with the following guidelines:

Confidentiality and Releases of Information for Young People in Care

At the time of admission, the custodial parent or authorized representative from the custodial agency must complete a release allowing Sojourners to obtain pertinent information about the child from various agencies, individuals and institutions.

Any time a Sojourners staff member needs to share information concerning a young person to an agency, individual, or institution they must have a signed release from the custodial agency or parent allowing them to share that information. Information may not be shared with anyone or any agency without custodial consent. The only information shared will be that information

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which the release authorizes Sojourners to share. The information should also only be utilized for the specified purpose stated on the release.

Releases will only be valid for 180 days. After the expiration of the release, a new release must be signed for any new or additional information. Consent to release information can be revoked by the custodial parent or agency. Upon revocation of consent further of specific information shall cease immediately except otherwise allowed by law.

Information that Sojourners Care Network has been court ordered to release must be shared with the appropriate authorities. Additionally, authorized representatives from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will also have access to the information stored in a young person's binder.

Sojourners must have written consent to release any information from a file for a young person who is no longer in care.

Confidentiality and Release of Information for Foster Caregivers

The Sojourners Care Network will not release any information regarding any foster caregiver unless one of the following conditions are met:

1. Request by and approved by the individual foster caregiver.
2. Information is ordered through a court order.
3. The custodial/placing agency requests the information.
4. Requested by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.
5. Requested by the SCN Board of Directors.
6. The agency administrator must approve all other request.

Sojourners Care Network will not share any foster caregiver information without the written permission from that foster caregiver. If information on a foster caregiver has been requested, Sojourners staff will have the foster caregiver sign a Release of Information form allowing Sojourners to share the information only with the requesting party. Sojourners' Administrator must sign the release of information authorizing the information to be shared. Once the Release of Information form is signed it is only valid for 180 days. Foster Caregivers have the right to refuse to sign the release of information form.

Information that Sojourners has been court ordered to release must be shared with the appropriate authorities.

For the procedures to disseminate information regarding a child fatality please see policy #41.

Adoptive Parents

As noted in Policy #4, Sojourners is required to notify the local public children's services agency (PCSA), within ten (10) days, when an adoptive homestudy assessment is initiated within their county.

Written notification to the PCSA shall include the applicant's name, address, and telephone number; names and dates of birth of all household members at the time of application; a request for any relevant information and/or placements; information on events leading to a removal of any child from the prospective adoptive home; confirmation of household members as determined by a review of the agency records.

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If the approved adoptive family provides an authorization for release of information, the agency shall make the homestudy available to any other agency requesting a copy of the homestudy. The agency shall release the homestudy and related materials within fifteen (15) days after the request is made as long as the requirements have been met. The agency shall not release a homestudy when it is determined that the application or the homestudy contains a false statement knowingly made by the applicant(s) and included in the written report of the homestudy.

Social Media

Breaches in confidentiality include but are not limited to statements or photographs of foster youth on social networking websites such as Facebook, Myspace etc... The placing of photos on these sites is considered a breach of confidentiality. Furthermore, you cannot put the name of the foster youth or direct comments about them on social media websites.

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Revised: 12-7-16

Tx/FF Policy #60



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #61**

**Specialized and Family Foster Care Program Evaluation
5101:2-5-13(A)18**

Purpose:

To ensure that the Sojourners Care Network specialized treatment foster care program is meeting the needs of specialized foster caregivers, children in care and the families of children in care.

Policy:

Sojourners will conduct an annual evaluation of the specialized treatment foster care program. Foster caregivers, and the families of children in care when applicable will be sent a Family and Specialized Program Evaluation Form (SCN-FSE-357-27). Young people in care will be sent a Youth Satisfaction Survey (SCN-YSS-357-26). The Family and Specialized Program Evaluation will ask foster caregivers, and the families of children in care, to assess treatment and support staff as well as training, utilization, and On Call procedures. The Youth Satisfaction Survey has questions pertaining to the young person's experience with Sojourners Care Network. The Training and Compliance Coordinator will mail the evaluations to foster caregivers, families of children in care and young people by January the 30th of each year.

Foster caregivers, children in care and the families of children in care completing the evaluations will have the option to sign their forms or they may return them anonymously. Foster caregivers, children in care and families of children in care can mail in or drop off their completed evaluations to the Training and Compliance Coordinator. Evaluations will be reviewed by the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist. Evaluation results will be shared with the Sojourners Administrator. The Sojourners Administrator will utilize the feedback from the evaluations to improve service delivery. Only the Sojourners Administrator, the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist and the Training and Compliance Coordinator will have access to the evaluations.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #62**

**Behavior Intervention Policy
5101:2-5-13(A)(14)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the Sojourners Care Network behavior management program. This policy will outline the range of acceptable and appropriate behavior intervention procedures and how these provisions should be carried out so they are consistent with the needs and rights of young people.

Policy:

Behavioral interventions are most effective when used before a child's behavior gets out of control, giving the child more dignity and choices. The more control a child feels he/she feels over his/her own behavior, the more self-confident and cooperative the child will become. Offering the following options while the child is still in control and able to think will get better results.

Catch Them "Being Good"

Let the child know that you notice positive behavior—"Thank you for being patient when we were waiting in line." "I appreciate the way you kept your cool when Susie yelled at you, that shows maturity."

Charting/Reward System

Keeping track of a child's positive behaviors in order for the child to earn privileges, time spent alone with caregiver, or items predetermined by the child and caregiver.

Humor

Getting a child to laugh releases energy and diffuses the situation.

Redirection

Shifting the child's focus to an acceptable behavior. "Let's play with the cars until Johnny is through with the blocks." "Why don't you work on your project while you wait for Susie to get off the computer?"

Offering a Graceful Way Out

Giving the child an opportunity to redirect him/herself before making a negative choice. "Johnny, would you like to think a minute about this and make a better decision? I'd love to spend some good time with you this evening."

Prompted Relaxation

Encouraging the child to take slow deep breaths, close his/her eyes, count to 20, relax all muscles.

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Revised: 6-1-16
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FF/Tx Policy #62

Anger Management

Offering the child alternative activities that are known to calm him/her – writing, exercising, drawing, listening to music, talking to someone, walking away from the situation, taking a bath or shower, imagining he/she is in a safe and happy place in his/her mind, etc. This is most effective when the child is showing signs of becoming angry, but has not yet had an outburst. Also helpful when a child is “cooling off” after an outburst.

Time Out

Removing the child from a potential conflict. Time limits should be age appropriate (1 minute per year of child’s age up until the age of 5) and appropriate to the child’s developmental and emotional abilities. Children may be able to ask for time out if feeling stressed in a situation.

Limiting Peer Social Interaction

Limiting or restricting the use of the telephone time, TV or computer time, time spent with peers outside of the home, where a child may go.

Natural and Logical Consequences

Consequences that occur as a natural result of a negative action “You broke the window, you’ll have to buy a new one and help me replace it.” “You were not able to stay within the limits when I let you do this on your own, you’ll need to stay with me until I feel that you can be trusted again.” “You left your bike outside and it was stolen, you’ll have to figure out what to do until you can buy another one.” “You hit your brother, you’ll need to apologize and find something kind to do for him to make up for that.” Allowing the school/law to intervene where appropriate, instead of getting the child “off the hook”

House consequences

Pre-determined consequences for breaking house rules – House or yard work above and beyond expected chores, but appropriate for the misbehavior.

Nonviolent Crisis Intervention

** A foster caregiver shall not use any form of chemical, prone or mechanical restraint on a child.**

Restrictive Behavior can only be used for:

- Self protection
- For protection of the child from self destructive behaviors
- To protect another person from a foster child

A foster caregiver shall use only the least restrictive physical restraint necessary to control the situation. Additionally, a foster caregiver shall not use any device to prevent or restrict movement as punishment or for staff convenience.

CPI Children’s Control Position

Gain Control of the child’s arms from behind and cross the arms in front of the child. The arms should be positioned high on the child’s upper chest and secured by locking one arm underneath the other. This will prevent the child from slipping through and will minimize any pressure on the child’s chest or abdomen. Position yourself behind the child while maintaining close body contact and standing to one side. This position allows you to maintain a balanced stance while managing the child.

CPI Team Control Position

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This technique is done by two staff members or foster caregivers. Facing the same direction as the acting out person while adjusting, as necessary to maintain body contact with the individual. Keeping their inside legs in front of the individual. Bring the individual's arms across their bodies securing them to their hip areas. Place the hands closest to the individual's shoulders in a c-shape position to direct the shoulders forward.

Physical restraint of a child can only be executed by a foster caregiver who has completed specific training and annual reviews in acceptable methods of restraint. Sojourners Care Network identifies acceptable methods of restraint as those set forth in the Crisis Prevention Institute's Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Course. Documentation of such trainings will be contained in the foster caregiver record.

If a young person is restrained, a Major and Unusual Incident form must be completed and submitted for review by the Sojourners Administrator within 24 hours. Sojourners will notify the placing agency immediately. The Sojourners Administrator will identify reason for further investigation.) The MUI will be filed in both the foster caregiver's binder and the young person's binder.

Instances when behavior interventions would be contradicted

Behavior interventions should always be used appropriately in accordance with the age, developmental level and/or experiences of the young person. Several of the nonrestrictive behavior interventions including (Humor, redirection, offering a graceful way out, charting, and prompted relaxation) should not be used when the young person is physically harming himself or someone else. Young people in these situations may need to be immediately removed from the situation. The Time-Out Intervention may be inappropriate to utilize with children who should not be left alone for extended periods of time. Additionally, (Natural or Logical Consequences) of a young person's actions that would be harmful should not be relied on as behavior intervention.

When the CPI Children's Control and Team Control Positions are used there should be constant monitoring for signs of distress. Young people showing signs of distress should receive medical attention immediately. Additionally, these techniques should be avoided with young people who have issues pertaining to touching and children who have been sexually abused.

Procedures for behavior interventions that are consistent with the needs of children with disabilities.

All behavior interventions are developed with consultation from the young person's treatment team. The appropriateness of the interventions is reviewed and approved by the young person's treatment team leader.

Those Sojourners Care Network employees involved with the design, approval, implementation, monitoring and supervision of this behavior intervention policy are Marcus Games, Sojourners Administrator; the Director of Foster Care, Nikki Krivanek MSW LSW; Clinical Supervisor, Kendall Brown-Clovis LPCC, CDCC-III; Treatment Team Leader, Steven Clever MSW LSW; and Youth Intervention Specialists (now referred to as Supportive Services Team members. Each Supportive Services Team member has completed Foster Caregiver pre-placement training courses including crisis prevention intervention training. They have also completed several trainings provided by local service providers on issues related to foster youth including anger management techniques.

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FF/Tx Policy #62



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #63**

**On Call Procedures and Access to Crisis Counseling
5101:2-5-13(A)(13)**

Purpose:

This policy outlines the protocol to ensure that foster caregivers and young people and the families of young people will have access to crisis counseling for issues related to a child placed within Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

At anytime foster caregivers, young people or their family members may call Sojourners for support and access to crisis counseling. All foster care staff have cell phones that allows them to be reached during office hours. Foster Caregivers can call any treatment team staff as well as any foster care administrative staff if necessary if needing to discuss any issues or to make a report. Sojourners also has an on-site clinician who is available for crisis counseling if necessary.

Sojourners can also contact the crisis intervention team at Hopewell Health Center for young people needing emergency mental health consultation in crisis and who may require a pre-screening.

Foster Caregivers are required to have the Sojourners Care Network main phone lines posted in their homes so that young people will have access to those numbers if necessary. Supportive Services Team members give foster caregivers their cell phone numbers so that they can be reached directly when out of the office.

After hours, the main office phone lines 1-(800)-237-5277 and 740-596-1117 will be forwarded to a foster care administrative staff person for emergencies and concerns including the death or hospitalization of a child.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #64**

**Treatment Team Leader Supervision Policy
5101:2-5-13(A)(10)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the responsibilities and capacities of the Treatment Team Leader Supervisor.

Policy:

The Treatment Team Leader Supervisor must be a licensed professional and have at least a master's degree in psychology, social work, or counseling. The Treatment Team Leader Supervisor must also have at least 2 years of experience working with youth. The Treatment Team Leader Supervisor will report to the Sojourners Administrator.

The Treatment Team Leader Supervisor is responsible for supervision of 1 Treatment Team Leader(s) and up to 8 Supportive Services Team Members. The Treatment Team Leader Supervisor is also responsible for the clinical supervision of the Sojourners Administrator. Treatment staff will have a scheduled time each week to meet with the supervisor and review the young people on their caseload. The treatment staff will report the progress each young person is making toward meeting service plan goals as well as relay any issues that have developed with a young person.

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Tx Policy #64



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #65**

**Treatment Foster Caregiver Capacity
5101:2-5-32
5101:2-5-36
5101:2-7-16**

Purpose:

To set forth the specifications for young people with special and exceptional needs placed on a treatment foster home.

Policy:

A treatment foster caregiver initially certified shall meet **at least one** of the following requirements:

- A minimum of three hundred sixty-five days of caring for a foster child in placement as a certified foster caregiver.
- A minimum of sixty hours of training in a classroom setting that complies with the following:
 - For an applicant the training shall be completed within twenty-four months prior to the date of application for initial certification as a specialized caregiver.
 - For a certified caregiver the training shall be completed within twenty-four months of the certified caregiver's written intent to upgrade their certification if the caregiver has not met requirement of caring for a foster child in placement as a certified foster caregiver for a minimum of three hundred sixty-five days.
 - The training shall relate to children with special or exceptional needs as defined in rule [5101:2-47-18](#) of the Administrative Code.
- A minimum of five years' cumulative experience caring for a child in the home of the foster caregiver or applicant on a daily basis.
- A minimum of one year of cumulative experience caring for a child who has special or exceptional needs as defined in rule 5101:2-47-18 of the Administrative Code in the home of the foster caregiver or applicant on a daily basis.

Each treatment foster caregiver shall successfully complete the number of hours of preplacement and continuing training specified in Sojourners' Foster Caregiver Policy #29 required pursuant to rules [5101:2-5-13](#) and [5101:2-5-33](#) of the Administrative Code.

A treatment foster caregiver shall not provide care for more than five (5) foster children at any one time, and is subject to following limitations and exceptions:

**Originated: 11-24-03
Revised: 10-11-10
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16**

Tx Policy #65

When a foster caregiver has been certified for less than two years to operate a foster home, or has less than two years of professional child care experience as documented by Sojourners Care Network, the following applies:

- Not more than three (3) foster children shall be placed in the home at any one time except sibling groups.
- Not more than two (2) children under the age of two (2) years, except sibling groups, including the children of a foster caregiver, and children receiving any private child care services, shall reside or receive child care services in a foster home at any one time.
- Not more than four (4) children under the age of five (5) years, except sibling groups, including the children of a foster caregiver, and children receiving any private child care services, shall reside or receive child care services in a foster home at any one time.
- Not more than two (2) foster children with special or exceptional needs shall be placed in a foster home, without specific justification in accordance with agency policy. Such justification, which may include the need to place a sibling group, or the abilities of a particular foster caregiver(s) in relation to the exceptional needs of a particular child, shall be documented in the child's case record and in the treatment foster home record. If more than two (2) exceptional needs children are placed in a treatment foster home, all agencies holding custody of any other children placed in the home shall be notified by the agency recommending certification of the home within seventy-two hours of the additional exceptional needs child's placement.
- No child who has special or exceptional needs shall be placed in a foster home unless the foster caregiver has been certified to operate a treatment foster home.

The following exceptions may allow a treatment foster caregiver to provide foster care for more than five (5) children at any one time:

- To accommodate a sibling group or the remaining members of a sibling group.
- When the additional child or children are related to the foster caregiver by blood or marriage.
- When the additional child or children are foster children who previously resided in the foster home.
- When the additional child or children are the children of a foster child who resides in the foster home.
- If a foster home has less than five foster children placed, the home may accept one additional sibling group that causes the foster home to exceed the limit of five foster children. The foster home that accepts a sibling placement in this circumstance shall not exceed a total of ten children in the home as specified in paragraph "E" of Ohio Administrative Code 2-5-32.

Not more than a total of ten (10) children, including the children of a foster caregiver, children being cared for by a type B child care provider and children receiving any private child care services, shall reside or receive child care services in a foster home at any one time. Placement of

a physically handicapped foster child in a foster home shall be made only after the agency has assured that any necessary special arrangements to meet the child's needs have been made.

Originated: 11-24-03
Revised: 10-11-10
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

Tx Policy #65



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #66**

**Continuity of Care Policy
5101:2-5-13 (B)(C)(D)**

Purpose:

To ensure that all agency staff shall implement all current written policies of the agency and that all activities and programs occur in accordance with such policies.

Policy:

All agency programs and activities that are connected with or serve the youth in foster care must adhere to the conditions set forth in the foster care policies. All agency programs will receive a copy of the foster care policy manual and will be required to implement these policies if and when necessary. Failure to abide by these policies when applicable will result in a corrective action plan which will be approved and monitored by the Sojourners Administrator, the Director of Continuous Quality Improvement/Licensing Specialist, the Training and Compliance Coordinator and the direct supervisor of the employee.

All employees of programs which involve foster youth must complete training on foster care policies and procedures as well as treatment teams. It is the responsibility of each program director to orientate each new hire to these policies and procedures. Employees must also be certified in First Aid, CPR and Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and maintain certification.

All new foster care policies will be placed in each program director's mailbox and it is the responsibility of the program director to communicate all new foster care policies to their staff.

Any critical incidents, any behavior that causes harm to self or others, any changes in a young person's care must be documented on a Major and Unusual Incident Form immediately and reported to the young person's treatment team within 24 hours.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #67**

**Treatment Team Leader Capacity
5101:2-5-13(A)(10)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to describe the responsibilities and capacities of the Treatment Team Leaders.

Policy:

A Treatment Team Leader shall be a professionally licensed person who can demonstrate that the topics they are trained in are appropriate to treatment foster care. A Treatment Team Leader Supervisor will over see the Treatment Team Leaders.

Each Treatment Team Leader will be responsible for providing counseling and limited case management services for up to 20 treatment foster children. Case management services will be provided primarily by the Supportive Services Team members on the treatment team. The Treatment Team Leader will be responsible for completing a clinical case review for these young people every 90 days.

The Treatment Team Leaders will document all contact that they have with the foster youth, their caregivers, and members of the treatment team as well as any collateral contacts. All documentation will be maintained and securely filed in the Treatment Team Leader's office. Additionally, Counseling Progress Notes (PN6fm.doc) will be filed in the young person's record.

**Originated: 11-24-03
Revised: 02-21-2007
Revised: 10/11/10
Revised: 6-1-16**

Tx Policy #67



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #68**

Drug Testing

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for administering a drug screen for a young person in care.

Policy:

Any time there is the suspicion of drug use, or a drug screen is court ordered or ordered by a counselor, Sojourners will administer an instant drug screen. A female Supportive Services Team member will administer female drug screens for the young person requiring the screen, and a male Supportive Services Team member will administer male drug screens for the young person. Other authorized staff members may conduct the drug screen with the young person in order to ensure staff member is of the same gender as young person being tested. If the results of the drug screen are negative a copy of the test is sent to the custodian. If the test results are positive a copy of the test is sent to the custodian and the specimen is sent to a lab to be reviewed by a chief technologist to identify drug levels.

All staff who administer drug screen must complete an in-service training on the appropriate methods to conduct a drug screen.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy # 69**

**Independent Living Evaluation and Plan
5101:2-42-19
5101:2-7-03 (D)**

Purpose:

To outline the procedures for the provision of independent living services to foster youth.

Policy:

Independent living services will be provided for each young person who is fourteen years of age or older. A Supportive Services Team member working with young person who has reached the age of fourteen will arrange for that young person to complete an Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment to establish the need for life skills. Once the young person has completed a written assessment, the Outreach Services Team member will submit the answers online to receive an aggregated score. The results of this evaluation as well as input from the youth, the youth's caregiver, and the youth's case manager will be documented within the Independent Living Plan and shared with the treatment team. This evaluation has to be completed within sixty days of the youth's sixteenth birthday or thirty days after the youth enters into care, whichever is first.

An Independent Living Plan to achieve self sufficiency shall be developed within thirty days of completion of the evaluation. The Independent Living Plan will be developed by the young person's treatment team at the second scheduled wraparound meeting after admission into care. The plan will be based on the Life Skills Assessment and will include input from the youth, the youth's custodian, the caregiver, Supportive Services Team member and significant others in the youth's life. Sojourners Care Network Outreach Services team member(s) will attend the second wraparound team meeting to function as a consultant on independent living skills and provide access to resources.

The Independent Living Plan documents the strengths, limitations, and resources of the youth and will outline the services that will be provided to the youth. The Independent Living Plan will address issues and concerns related to the following:

1. Daily Living Skills
 - a. Securing and maintaining a residence (e.g. Landlord/Tenant Rights and responsibilities, basic home maintenance)
 - b. Home Management (e.g. food preparation, nutrition, cleaning, laundry, home safety)
 - c. Shopping (e.g. purchasing food, household supplies, clothing)
 - d. Money Management (e.g. budgeting, banking, maintaining a savings account, taxes)
 - e. Utilization of Community Services and Systems (e.g. libraries, accessing assistance programs)
 - f. Accessing and Utilizing Transportation (e.g. how to obtain a driver's license and insurance, public transportation)

**Originated: 11-24-03
Revised: 9-15-14
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised 12-7-16**

FF/Tx Policy #69

- g. Utilization of Leisure Time
 - h. Personal Care, Hygiene and Safety
 - i. Pregnancy Prevention and/or Parenting Skills
 - j. Time Management
2. Enhancement of personal decision making and communication skills
 3. Assistance in obtaining a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED), evaluating personal educational goals, and planning preparation for post secondary education and training.
 4. Planning for job and/or career development.
 5. Securing and maintaining employment.
 6. Planning for ongoing and emergency personal health care needs (including education about avoidance of drug and alcohol abuse, risky sexual behavior, and smoking).
 7. Building a positive self image and self esteem.
 8. Development of positive adult relationships and support systems.

The Independent Living Plan will be reviewed every ninety days until the youth is discharged from care. Progress will be monitored by treatment team. One week prior to the young person's eighteenth birthday he/she will re-take the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment.

A foster Caregiver shall not prohibit the foster child from participating in independent living services.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #70**

**Treatment Foster Caregiver Licensure Requirements
5101:2-7-16**

Purpose:

To outline the state requirements for certification to become a treatment foster caregiver as well as the responsibilities of treatment foster caregivers.

Policy:

Licensure Requirements:

A treatment foster caregiver initially certified shall meet **at least one** of the following requirements set forth in section 5101:2-7-16 of the Ohio Revised Code as well as pass the assessment set forth in Sojourners Care Network Foster Caregiver Policy #4.

- A minimum of three hundred sixty-five days of caring for a foster child in placement as a certified foster caregiver.
- A minimum of sixty hours of training in a classroom setting that complies with the following:
 - For an applicant the training shall be completed within twenty-four months prior to the date of application for initial certification as a specialized caregiver.
 - For a certified caregiver the training shall be completed within twenty-four months of the certified caregiver's written intent to upgrade their certification if the caregiver has not met requirement of caring for a foster child in placement as a certified foster caregiver for a minimum of three hundred sixty-five days.
 - The training shall relate to children with special or exceptional needs as defined in rule [5101:2-47-18](#) of the Administrative Code.
- A minimum of five years' cumulative experience caring for a child in the home of the foster caregiver or applicant on a daily basis.
- A minimum of one year of cumulative experience caring for a child who has special or exceptional needs as defined in rule 5101:2-47-18 of the Administrative Code in the home of the foster caregiver or applicant on a daily basis.

Each treatment foster caregiver shall successfully complete the number of hours of preplacement and continuing training specified in Sojourners' Foster Caregiver Policy #29 required pursuant to rules [5101:2-5-13](#) and [5101:2-5-33](#) of the Administrative Code.

Equivalent Child Care Experience is defined as if an applicant has:

- An ODJFS Type A or B Daycare provider license and at least two years' experience working in a Daycare setting.
- At least two years' experience providing case management services to at risk youth.
- At least two years' experience working as an aid with special needs youth in a service provider role.
- At least two years' experience working with at risk youth in a voluntary or community service position (i.e Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Mentor, Girl and Boy Scouts, 4-H, Americorp)
- An LPN with two years' experience working with special needs youth in a direct service provider role.
- At least two years' experience providing in home, out of home, or kinship care for youth with special or exceptional needs.

* Successful parenting of one's own children cannot be the sole criteria for determining the equivalent experience required.

Sojourners Care Network requires applicants to provide appropriate documentation and references for verification of experience, credentials, education and training.

Sojourners Care Network will review each applicant's circumstance on a case by case basis. Those applicants who have education or experience which is comparable to those listed above may request a waiver that must be approved by the Sojourners Administrator and Sojourners' Licensing Specialist.

Treatment foster caregiver applicants must also successfully complete no fewer than 36 hours of pre-placement training including First Aid and Adult, Child and Infant CPR, and Nonviolent Crisis Intervention training.

Treatment Foster Caregiver Responsibilities:

Each treatment foster caregiver will receive a Treatment Manual once they have become licensed. The manual will include all foster caregiver policies, and forms.

Each treatment foster caregiver is required to complete 60 of continuing training per recertification period.

A treatment foster caregiver will attend and participate in the treatment team meetings for each child placed in his home. For a household with two or more certified foster caregivers, only one caregiver is required to attend the treatment team meetings.

Each treatment foster caregiver is required to be part of a treatment team and under the direction of the treatment team leader shall assume primary responsibility for implementing the in home treatment strategies specified in the child's service plan and any revisions.

Each treatment foster caregiver shall prepare and keep current a written record of the behavior and progress of the child towards achieving the treatment goals as identified in the service plan.

Each treatment foster caregiver shall work cooperatively with the family of the child according to the child's service plan.

Each treatment foster caregiver shall follow all ODJFS rules and regulations set forth in the Ohio Administrative Code as well as all Sojourners Care Network Policies and procedures.

The treatment foster caregiver or at least one licensed foster caregiver member of a home must have weekly consultation and face-to-face contact at least every two weeks with the recommending agencies professional treatment staff. At least one of the face-to-face contacts each month will be in the treatment foster home.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #71**

**Transporting Youth
5101:2-7-15**

Purpose:

The Sojourners Care Network provides transportation services to many youths in various programs throughout. To ensure the safety of all youth, foster caregivers, and staff, this policy outlines the requirements and procedures for any and all youth transported by the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

Any vehicle owned or leased by a foster caregiver and used to transport a foster child shall be maintained in a safe condition and in compliance with all motor vehicle laws. Such vehicles shall be covered by liability insurance in accordance with current state laws. A foster caregivers shall ensure that any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle shall be licensed to drive that class of vehicle and that such vehicle is maintained in a safe condition according to state laws.

All foster caregivers, staff, AmeriCorps members who transport any youth are required to complete a driving application that includes questions about moving traffic violations, current or revoked licenses or permits, and types of licenses held. The application also includes permission for the Sojourners Care Network to submit the potential driver's name to the Sojourners Care Network automobile insurance carrier to receive a driving report on the prospective driver from the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The application must be completed as part of the Sojourners Care Network pre-certification or pre-employment packet. In addition to the application, the perspective driver must also provide a copy of their current license and proof of insurance card.

When foster caregivers, employees, and AmeriCorps members use their personal vehicle to transport youth, the driver's personal insurance will serve as the primary insurance, with the Sojourners Care Network auto insurance serving as secondary "rider" insurance.

Upon completing a screening process, the Sojourners Care Network Operations Coordinator will meet with the potential driver to discuss any issues that may arise. Foster caregivers, staff persons, or AmeriCorps members who have any of the following will not be permitted to transport youth:

- A felony conviction with a motor vehicle
- A conviction for reckless driving or driving under the influence
- A suspended or revoked license
- A conviction for driving without insurance
- Three or more moving violations in one year
- Two or more "at fault" accidents in one year

Participants of Youthbuild of Southeast Ohio are not allowed to transport foster children under any circumstances.

Originated: 11-24-03

Revised: 1-27-10

Revised: 6-1-16

Failure to transport youth may affect a staff persons or AmeriCorps members ability to perform their job responsibilities or provide care, and may result in sanctioned employment or termination. A potential applicant for employment or potential foster caregiver may not be employed or certified if they are not permitted to transport youth.

Failure to meet the requirements of this driving policy by an employee, AmeriCorps member, or volunteer will prohibit that employee, AmeriCorps member, or volunteer to use Sojourners Care Network vehicles or personal vehicles to conduct any Sojourners Care Network function.

Safe Driving Requirements

When transporting any youth associated with Sojourners Care Network, the foster caregivers, staff and AmeriCorps members must comply with the following requirements.

- Use of seatbelts (lap and shoulder) and headlights at all times
- A foster caregiver shall ensure compliance with any motor vehicle seat restraint requirement of section 4511.81 of the Revised Code.
 - Foster children less than eight (8) years of age and less than four-feet nine-inches (4'9") in height shall be properly restrained in a booster seat, placed in the rear seat.
 - All children age twelve (12) and under:
 - Shall be restrained by a seat belt at all times and if riding in a motor vehicle that has a back seat, whenever possible, shall not ride in the front seat of the vehicle. If child must ride in the front seat of the vehicle, the foster caregiver is responsible for disabling the passenger air bag.
- Obey all traffic laws
- Always have your license with you while driving
- Do not consume alcohol or medication that may impair vision, hearing, or reflexes prior to or while driving for the Sojourners Care Network
- Keep doors locked when driving and when car is parked
- Do not drive if you are tired or not feeling well

Utilization of Sojourners Care Network Owned Vehicles

Staff persons and AmeriCorps members who utilize vehicles owned by Sojourners Care Network must comply with all above requirements and the following:

- *Maintain Mileage and Maintenance Log:* Each vehicle has a log book for drivers to record each trip, including the driver, purpose, and miles driven. The log should also document any maintenance or repairs performed.
- *Completion of Pre-Trip Inspection:* Each driver will complete the pre-trip inspection form before any trip. Any issues will immediately be reported to the Sojourners Care Network Operations Coordinator.

The Sojourners Care Network Business Manager is responsible for the supervision of all Sojourners Care Network owned vehicles. Participants of Youthbuild of Southeast Ohio are responsible for cleaning and coordinating a routine maintenance schedule on all Sojourners Care Network vehicles, under the supervision of the Operations Coordinators.

Reporting Accidents and/or Traffic Violations

Originated: 11-24-03
Revised: 1-27-10
Revised: 6-1-16

When a foster caregiver, staff, or AmeriCorps member is transporting a young person in care or driving a Sojourners Care Network owned vehicle, and an accident occurs or the driver receives a traffic/moving violation, the staff person will immediately contact the Sojourners Care Network Operations Coordinator, after calling the appropriate law enforcement and/or emergency service personnel.

Pursuant to the Sojourners Care Network Drug Free Workplace policy, any staff involved in an accident during their workday is required to complete a drug screening immediately, regardless of the severity of the accident.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #72**

**Participation and Supervision
5101:2-5-13(A)(21)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety of all foster youth and anyone involved in any Sojourners Care Network program, activity, or event. Also, to emphasize the importance of the treatment team's involvement in all decisions made concerning a young person in foster care.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network encourages the young people in our care to participate in youth development programs, activities and events. However, the youth in care have a variety of issues that need to be considered prior to any participation in any program, activity, or event. Before a young person is invited to take part in any program, activity, or event the request must be submitted in person to the treatment team. The treatment team will review the request and decide whether or not participation in proposed program, activity, or event is in the best interest of the young person. The treatment team must provide written permission for participation with approval from the Agency Administrator. In some instances, a safety plan must be developed prior to participation in a program, activity or event.

As stated in FCG Policy #66 any staff member who is involved in a program, activity, or event must complete foster care policies, procedures and treatment teams. Additionally, any youth who participates in a program, activity, or event must be supervised in accordance with foster care rules and regulations as well as any safety plans if necessary. The treatment team must be notified immediately of pending changes in the status of a young person in the program or activity.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #73**

**Recommendation of Revocation, Denial of Initial Certification or Denial of Recertification
of a Foster Home Certificate
5101:2-5-26**

Purpose:

To outline the procedures to recommend revocation, denial of initial certification or denial of recertification of a foster home certificate.

Policy:

At any time during the certification or recertification process Sojourners Care Network can make the decision to recommend denial of initial certification, denial of recertification, or revocation of a foster home certificate. Sojourners Care Network will contact the ODJFS, children services licensing enforcement coordinator for consultation regarding required evidence procedures and advice prior to notifying the applicant of foster caregiver of the agency's intent.

If Sojourners Care Network decides to recommend revocation, denial of initial certification or denial of recertification Sojourners Care Network shall provide written notification, on ODJFS 01315 form, by regular mail and certified mail, return receipt requested to the applicant of the foster caregiver of the following:

1. The reason of the decision to recommend denial of initial certification, denial of recertification, or revocation;
2. The specific law or rule(s) with which the applicant or foster caregiver is allegedly not in compliance;
3. The method of and time limits for requesting a local agency grievance meeting; and
4. That the final decision to deny initial certification, denial of recertification, or revocation of the certificate will be made by ODJFS at which time the applicant or caregiver shall be afforded the opportunity to request a hearing pursuant to chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

Following the completion of the above paragraph Sojourners Care Network shall notify ODJFS of the recommendation of revocation, denial of initial certification or denial of recertification of a foster home certificate Sojourners Care Network will submit documentation of:

1. A summary of the grievance meeting, if one was held
2. Identification of rules with which the applicant or foster caregiver is alleged not in compliance;
3. Specific documentation and evidence supporting the recommendation;
4. A copy of the ODJFS 01315 and the certified mail return receipt sent to the applicant or foster caregiver.

Upon receipt of the ODJFS 01317 ODJFS shall evaluate the evidence and documentation submitted by Sojourners Care Network and shall take one of the following actions:

1. Return the ODJFS 01317 and evidence to the agency due to insufficient or inappropriate evidence and documentation, with a written explanation of the deficiency;

2. Reject the agency's recommendation in writing, specifying the reasons for rejection;
3. Proceed with the denial or revocation process.

If an agency has access to the statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), the agency shall recommend the denial of initial certification, denial of recertification or revocation of the certificate through SACWIS. A JFS Form 1317 shall not be completed.

At the time ODJFS proceeds with the agency's recommendation to deny or revoke a foster home certificate ODJFS will notify the foster caregiver pursuant to Chapter 5101:6-50 of the Administrative Code. A copy of the notification shall be sent to Sojourners Care Network which shall immediately notify any other agency which may have a child placed in the foster home.

The decision to proceed or not proceed with a recommendation for denial or revocation rests solely with ODJFS in its exercise of discretion. If a foster home applicant or certification has been denied or revoked they shall not be eligible for any ODJFS children service license or certification for five years of the date of denial or revocation or the exhaustion of all appeals.



**Sojourner Care Network
FCG Policy #75**

**Respite Policy
5101:2-5-13(A)(11)**

Purpose

The purpose of the Respite Care Policy is to outline the utilization of planned and crisis direct placement care by young people in care.

Policy

Respite care, both planned and during a crisis, must be available to young people and foster caregivers to ensure the emotional health and safety risks of families. We continue to provide access to respite care twenty-four hours a day 365 days per year to all foster caregivers and young people within our network. There are many reasons respite may be needed on a continuum of planned to emergent needs. Respite care should be carefully planned and closely monitored and evaluated.

An individualized respite plan is developed for all young people with special or exceptional needs placed in specialized treatment care. This plan is a section within our Service Plan (SCN-SP-35715(a)). Each individualized respite care plan documents the young person's planned and crisis respite care needs. The Treatment Team identifies these needs as the Service plan is developed. In addition, the plan documents any and all special considerations needed when identifying the Respite Care Provider.

We define respite care as a temporary placement change lasting for more than 24 hours but for no more than 14 consecutive days. Respite cannot be provided any longer than 14 consecutive days unless the provider is certified as a specialized foster caregiver. The child returns to the original family foster home by the end of the 14 days. Only certified foster caregivers may provide needed respite care, we do not utilize non-foster caregivers for respite care. Only those Specialized Treatment Caregivers may provide respite care to young people in specialized treatment care. This increases our respite capacity and aids in the development of the caregivers' skill development. The foster care management team identifies potential respite care providers with direct input from the young person's foster caregiver and Treatment Team. When identifying potential respite providers, the management team will consider the number of treatment children already placed in the home. In addition, when identifying a potential respite care provider for a young person in need, the child's educational service shall be considered. However, educational services will not be the only factor considered for respite. In the event a young person cannot attend his or her school while in respite, a Sojourners staff person will contact the young person's school to make arrangements for any make-up work. Only the Sojourners Administrator may approve a respite care plan as pursuant to our Admission and Intake Policy.

When a young person is placed in respite care, a Respite Child Care Agreement form will be signed by the care provider and a Sojourners Care Network representative. Sojourners Care Network will provide the respite care provider with a copy of the ODJFS 01443 "Child's Education and Health Information form and a written copy of the most recent Service Plan (SCN-SP-357-15(a) or a copy of the most recent Service Plan Review/Amendment (SCN-SPRA-357-(b). Additionally, any information required to be shared with a foster caregiver by the rule 5101:2-42-90 of the OAC will be shared with the direct placement provider at this time. This information will be provided by Sojourners as the agency that approved the respite care provider. These documents are maintained with the young person's case record at Sojourners.

Finally, we believe in closely monitoring and evaluating all respite care episodes. For each occasion of respite, the respite care provider is required to complete our Respite Response Form (SCN-RRF-357-21) describing the young person's stay in direct placement. The form will be completed upon discharge from the respite care placement and a copy of the form will be given to the young person's specialized foster caregiver. Another copy of the form will be filed in the young person's binder. This information reported will be processed with young person's foster care giver and Treatment Team.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #75**

**Successful Completion of Training Courses
5101:2-5-40(G)(4)(b)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures for assessing the successful completion of a training course provided by the Sojourners Care Network.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network shall consider a training session successfully completed if the participant adequately attends and engages in the training session. Participants must sign the registration sheet at the beginning of training in order to receive credit for the training session. The Training and Compliance Coordinator shall maintain a record of all training registrations. Upon successful completion of a training session, registered participants shall receive a certificate of completion for the training. A copy of each certificate shall be maintained in the foster caregiver record.

Fifteen Minute Rule:

Any participant who misses fifteen (15) minutes or more of an individual training session will not receive credit for the training session.

Participants from Other Agencies:

Successful training participants from agencies other than Sojourners Care Network shall receive a copy of their training certificate via mail. In addition, a copy of each certificate shall be provided to the recommending agency of the training participant.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #76**

**Waiver Policy
5101:2-5-33(J)**

Purpose

To outline the requirements a foster caregiver must meet in order to be eligible for a waiver.

Policy

The Sojourners Care Network can waive up to eight hours of training at the beginning of a foster caregiver's second certification period or a subsequent certification period for a foster caregiver. With the approval of the Sojourners Administrator, foster caregivers will be waived from those training hours if they have met the requirements set forth in Section 5101:2-5-33 of the Ohio Administrative Code.

In order to be eligible for a training waiver the foster caregiver must:

- have been certified as caregiver for at least two years
- have provided foster care for at least 90 days of the 12 months prior to the date of the waiver
- have complied with the training needs assessment and the continuing training plan
- have not violated any requirement governing certification in the last year

Documentation of the waiver will be maintained in the foster caregivers training and compliance binder. The record will include the date the waiver was issued, the number of training hours waived and documentation that all of the aforementioned requirements have been met. All waivers will be signed and approved by the Sojourners Administrator.

The granting of a waiver of any requirement imposed by Chapters 5101:2-1, [5101:2-5](#), [5101:2-7](#), [5101:2-9](#), [5101:2-39](#), and [5101:2-42](#) of Chapter 5101:2-5-18 (A) of the Administrative Code is a discretionary act of the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS) based upon documentation as to why the agency or foster caregiver is not in compliance. The refusal of ODJFS to grant a waiver, in whole or in part, shall be final and shall not be construed as creating any rights to a hearing under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code. Waivers shall only be requested, and will be considered on a case by case basis, for the following:

- A waiver of the seventy-two (72) hour limitation for a children's crisis care facility to provide residential care to a pre-teen placed in the facility by a public children service agency (PCSA) or a private child placing agency (PCPA). The waiver may authorize the certified children's crisis care facility to provide residential care to the preteen for up to fourteen (14) consecutive days
- Relative foster homes when the request is for a non-safety issue
- A private, non-profit, therapeutic wilderness camp (PNTWC)

Originated: 11-22-04

Revised: 5/30/2012

Revised: 6-1-16

Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #76

Waiver requests that have been approved prior to the effective date of this rule (7/1/2016) shall remain in effect until the waiver expires unless the terms or conditions of the waiver are violated or otherwise become nullified by a situation or by a change in the applicable Administrative Code rule.

Beginning 10/1/2011, no variances shall be approved.

(I) Variance requests that have been approved prior 10-1-2011 shall remain in effect unless the terms or conditions of a variance are violated or otherwise become nullified by a situation or by a change in the applicable Administrative Code rule. If the variance is nullified, it shall be rescinded. ODJFS has sole discretion in the rescission of a variance. The rescission of a variance shall not be construed as creating any rights to a hearing under Chapter 119. of the Revised Code.

Originated: 11-22-04
Revised: 5/30/2012
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #76



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #77**

**Procedure for Complaints of Alleged Discriminatory Acts, Policies or Practices in the
Foster Care and Adoption Process that Involve Race, Color, or National Origin**

5101:2-33-03

5101:2-5-13(A)(25)(26)

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy to outline the Sojourners Care Network's procedure for handling complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the foster care and adoption process that involve race, color, or national origin.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network will not consider race, color or national origin as a factor in assessing the needs or best interests of young people. The Sojourners Care Network will not deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved. Additionally, the Sojourners Care Network will not deny or delay the placement of a child on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver, the adoptive parent or the young person involved.

All individuals applying or inquiring about applying to be a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent with the Sojourners Care Network will receive a written copy of this policy in the initial information packet ("Welcome Packet") that the Licensing Specialist provides to all prospective foster caregivers. This packet is sent to the inquiring applicants within seven (7) days of their first contact (either over the phone, via e-mail or electronic correspondence or face-to-face) with the agency.

Any individual may file a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy or practice involving race, color, or national origin that occurs during the foster care or adoption process of the agency. Additionally, any person, including but not limited to, an employee or former employee of the agency or a member of a family which has sought to become a foster caregiver, may also file a complaint alleging that he or she was intimidated, threatened, coerced, discriminated against or otherwise retaliated in some way by the agency because he or she has made complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing in connection with an allegation that the agency engaged in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices as it applies in the foster care or adoption process.

In the event that a foster caregiver or adoptive parent would like to file a complaint he or she can contact Sojourners Care Network at (740) 596-1117 or toll free at 1-800-237-5277 to request the JFS 02333 "Discrimination Complaint Form" and/or to request assistance in completing this form. An individual can file the complaint with any Public Children's Services Agency (PCSA), Private Child Placing Agency (PCPA), Private Non-Custodial Agency (PNA), the Ohio

Originated: 04-28-2005

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Revised: 12-7-16

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Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or the Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

A complaint must be filed within two (2) years from the date of the occurrence of the alleged discriminatory act; or two (2) years from the date upon which the complainant learned or should have known of a discriminatory act, policy or practice.

Per Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-33-03, If Sojourners Care Network receives any complaint alleging discrimination involving race, color, or national origin in the foster care and adoption process, Sojourners Care Network will contact the ODJFS-Bureau of Civil Rights (BCR) within three (3) working days from the date of receipt and forward the complaint onto ODJFS.

If Sojourners Care Network is the subject of the complaint, the agency shall not initiate, conduct or run a concurrent investigation surrounding the complaint or take any further action regarding the complainant or the subject of the complaint until the issuance of the final investigation report by ODJFS, unless such action is approved by ODJFS.

If Sojourners Care Network is the subject of the complaint, all staff will cooperate fully with ODJFS during the course of the investigation and shall submit any information requested by ODJFS no later than fourteen (14) days from the date of the request, unless otherwise agreed upon.

No person who has filed a complaint alleging a discriminatory act, policy, or practices involving race, color, or national origin in the foster care or adoption process of the agency or has testified assisted or participated in any manner in the investigation of a complaint shall be intimidated, threatened, coerced or retaliated against by any employee or contractor of the agency.

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Revised: 08-27-2008
Revised: 6-1-16
Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy # 77



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #78**

**Standards of Conduct Regarding MEPA and Title IV
5101:2-33-11
5101:2-48-05
5101:2-5-13(A) (26)**

Purpose

The purposes of the Standards of Conduct are to govern the performance of SCN employees or contractors in the compliance with the Multiethnic Placement Act of 1994 as amended by Section 1808 of the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 622(b)(9), 671(a)(18), 674(d) and 1996(b)(MEPA) and the Title IV Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., as they apply to the foster care and adoption process (Title VI). The standards are as follows:

1. The Sojourners Care Network shall not deny any person the opportunity to become a foster caregiver or an adoptive parent on the basis of race, color or national origin of that person, or of the child involved; or delaying or denying any placement of a child in foster care or for adoption on the basis of race, color or national origin of the foster caregiver(s), of the adoptive parent(s) or of the child involved.
2. In the event a SCN employee or contractor engages in discriminatory acts, policies, or practices involving race, color, or national origin in the foster care or adoption process as determined by ODJFS upon completion of the investigation pursuant to rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code, the SCN Co-Executive Director and/or his or her designee shall conduct an investigation of the act(s). The SCN Co-Executive Director and/or his designee will contact ODJFS to conduct an investigation.
3. Upon completion of an investigation of a discriminatory act by a SCN employee or contractor, the employee(s) or contractor(s) may be subject to penalties, sanctions and other disciplinary actions, which could include suspension and/or removal to be applied in accordance with employment law and the Sojourners Care Network Personnel Policies.
4. An agency Corrective Action shall be developed in the event of a finding of a discriminatory act by a SCN employee or contractor. The Corrective Action Plan shall address how the agency will prevent future acts/violations. A copy of the Corrective Action shall be submitted to ODJFS and the Chairperson of the

Sojourners Care Network Board of Directors, within thirty days of notification of the findings of the investigation.

5. Any SCN employee or contractor who is engaged in the placement of children into foster care or for adoption, or engaged in the recruitment, assessment, approval, or selection of a foster caregiver(s) or adoptive family shall be given a copy of the standards of conduct within thirty days of the effective date of the OAC Rule (3-2-2005). The SCN Agency Administrator shall review these standards with the above mentioned employees or contractors. Upon that review the employee or contractor shall sign a copy the Foster Care Standards of Conduct Regarding MEPA and Title IV Notification Form. The signed form shall be kept in the employee's or contractor's personnel file.
6. Within thirty days of the approval of these Standards of Conduct all existing employees or contractors shall meet with the SCN Director of Foster Care to review these standards and complete their notification form. In addition, any approved revisions to these standards shall result in all effected employees and contractors shall receive a copy of the revision(s) within thirty days of the revision(s). All new employees or contractors shall receive a copy of these written Standards of Conduct within thirty days of their hire date or the effective date of their contract.
7. Finally, no foster care or adoptive worker shall no be required to justify a proposed placement for the reason that the race, color or national origin of the child is different from that of the family whom the worker is proposing as the child's foster caregiver or adoptive parent.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #79**

**Rule Violation Investigation of a Foster Caregiver or Staff Person
5101:2-5-28(E)**

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for conducting a rule violation investigation of Sojourners Care Network foster caregiver or staff person in accordance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-13(A)13(c) and Sojourners Care Network Policy #34 (*Foster Caregiver Abuse and Neglect*).

Policy:

For all currently certified foster homes or employed staff members, Sojourners Care Network shall begin an investigation of all allegations of violations of Chapter 5101:2-7 of the Ohio Administrative Code within three (3) calendar days of receipt of an allegation of a rule violation. At a minimum, an investigation begins with the implementation of paragraph (B) of this rule or documenting the contact of the agency by any third party or law enforcement agency investigating the allegations to determine if the recommending agency can proceed with the rule noncompliance investigation. Sojourners Care Network shall complete the investigation within thirty (30) calendar days of beginning the investigation unless the investigation conflicts with any other third party or law enforcement investigation. The results of investigations conducted pursuant to this paragraph and the development and implementation of corrective action plans as required by the agency shall be documented and maintained in the foster caregiver or employee personnel record.

Any allegations of child abuse or neglect, abuse of mentally retarded or developmentally disabled, or elder abuse or neglect will be reported to the proper investigative agency immediately.

Staff Members

In the event that Sojourners Care Network receives an allegation of rule or policy violation against a staff member, the ODJFS Agency Administrator (or his designee) will follow the steps set forth in this policy to conduct an investigation and determine necessary corrective steps, as appropriate.

In occasions of conflicts of interest, such as staff members serving as foster caregivers, the ODJFS Agency Administrator will then notify the county children services agency in order to arrange for an objective third party investigator to complete the rule violation investigation and corrective action steps.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #80**

**Care of a Foster Child under Age Two
5101:2-7-10**

Purpose:

To outline the specific requirements for caring for young people who are under age two (2).

Policy:

A foster child who is under two (2) years of age or under thirty-five inches (35") in height shall be provided with a full-sized crib which meets the following requirements:

- Full-size crib which meets the requirements of the "Consumer Product Safety Commission"
- Crib slats shall be no more than two and three-eighths inches (2-3/8") apart.
- Decorative cutout areas on crib end panels which could entrap the head of a child shall not be permitted.
- Only cribs that are compliant with the U.S. consumer product safety commission shall be used.
- Each crib shall have a firm mattress which is at least one and one-half inches (1-1/2") thick and covered with a waterproof material not dangerous to the child. The mattress shall fit close enough in the frame so that there is no more than one inch (1") between the mattress and the sides of the crib.

A bassinet or cradle may be used only for infants less than fifteen (15) pounds in weight.

A foster child under two years of age shall be given regular opportunities for individual attention and physical contact with a caring adult. A foster child under two (2) years of age shall be given consistent and regular opportunities for safe and comfortable participation in developmental activities such as sitting, crawling, walking, and playing as appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability.

A foster child under two (2) years of age shall be supplied with safe play items appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability.

A foster child under two (2) years of age shall be fed according to instructions from the child's physician or the recommending agency as required by the individual child care agreement. For feeding, a foster child under two (2) years of age shall either be placed in a highchair, infant seat, or held, as appropriate to age. No foster child shall be placed in a crib or bassinet for feeding. At no time shall a bottle be propped for feeding.

If a foster child under two (2) years of age continually creates a danger to him or herself by climbing out of his/her crib and the foster caregiver, the custodial agency, and the recommending agency, if different, agree that the child should not continue to sleep safely in a crib, the child may use a toddler bed or other type of standard bed for sleeping, except that the child may not use the upper bunk of a bunk bed. Written documentation of any such agreement shall be signed by a custodial agency representative and maintained in the foster caregiver's record.

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Revised 1-24-08

Revised 9-15-14

Revised 6-1-16

Revised 12-7-16

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Revised 1-24-08
Revised 9-15-14
Revised 6-1-16
Revised 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #80



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #81**

**Conflict of Interest
5101:2-5-20(C)(D)**

Purpose:

Outline the Ohio Administrative Code regulations regarding managing for conflict of interest in foster care certification.

Policy:

To avoid a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, an assessor shall not conduct or approve a foster care home study or home study update for any of the following:

- Him or herself.
- Any person who is a family member of the assessor.
- Any agency employee for whom the assessor has any supervisory responsibility.
- Any agency employee who has any supervisory responsibility for the assessor.

An agency administrator and a family member of the agency administrator shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the administrator is employed.

A member of the agency's governing body and a person known to the agency as a family member of the agency's governing body shall not serve as a foster caregiver for the agency with which the governing body member is associated.

Those individuals who meet the aforementioned criteria who wish to apply to become foster caregivers will be referred to another recommending agency where there will be no conflict of interest.

An existing foster home certificate of any person who falls into one of the above categories need to transfer to another recommending agency by January 1, 2008 except that such persons who have one or more foster children currently placed in their foster home and who elect not to transfer to another agency may maintain the certificate and continue to provide care for the foster children currently placed in the home but shall not accept any additional placements of foster children.

When Sojourners Care Network becomes aware that a certified foster caregiver of the agency is a family member of the administrator or a family member of the agency's governing body, Sojourners Care Network shall take the necessary steps to initiate a transfer of the foster caregiver's foster home certificate. The transfer shall be accomplished within thirty (30) days of the discovery or by January 1, 2008, whichever is later.

Family member refers to spouse or significant other, or a parent, child, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin whether through birth or adoption. "Significant Other" means a person in a domestic relationship between two or more people living together and sharing a common domestic life but who are not joined in any type of legal partnership, marriage, or civil union recognized under Ohio law.

Originated: 02-21-2007

Revised 1-24-08

Revised 6-1-16

Revised 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #81



Sojourners Care Network FCG Policy #82

Clothing Vouchers

Purpose:

To disseminate the agency's protocol for providing clothing vouchers to young people in care.

Policy:

Sojourners Care Network has established service contracts with many counties in Ohio. Due to the nature of contracting with multiple agencies, the terms of the contracts vary from agency-to-agency. Therefore, in some instances, Sojourners Care Network is responsible for providing clothing allowances to young people in care.

In the event a young person is eligible for a clothing voucher through Sojourners Care Network, the young person or foster caregiver shall request a clothing voucher, in the amount of **one-hundred twenty-five (\$125) dollars**, through their Supportive Services Team member. The request must be reviewed and approved by the Agency Administrator.

In order to be eligible for a clothing voucher, the young person:

- Must be placed in a Sojourners Care Network foster home
- Must be referred by an agency that does not provide routine clothing allowances
- May have not received a clothing allowance from the referring agency or Sojourners Care Network within the previous six (6) months

Foster caregivers shall complete the "Return Receipt Form", which requires that the caregiver return purchase receipts and any remaining funds from the clothing voucher to Sojourners Care Network within thirty (30) days of receipt of voucher.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #83**

**Disaster Preparedness Plan
5101:2-5-13.1**

Purpose:

To describe the agency's plan for large-scale disaster situations, which may affect the health and safety of children placed in care.

Policy:

In the event of a substantial incident, or disaster, that significantly alters the normal modes of operation of Sojourners Care Network, this policy shall establish the alternative modes of operation to ensure the safety of young people and the continuity of operation. In the event of a disaster, all agency policies shall remain in effect, including policies #23 ("Required Notifications by Foster Caregivers to Sojourners Care Network") and #43 ("Notification of Relocation, Change in Household Occupancy, and Serious Illness or Accidents").

Essential Personnel and Activities

Access to the Sojourners Administrator shall remain essential to the operation of Sojourners Care Network. In addition, direct service staff members (including case managers), shall be accessible to ensure essential work activities are conducted and to maintain the continuity of services to children in care. These essential activities shall include direct youth services (including coordination, assessment of needs, crisis management, monitoring, and linking), caregiver support and assistance, and rule compliance monitoring. These activities shall continue in order to ensure child safety and support for caregivers and service providers.

Alternative Work Location

In the event of a substantial incident that alters the operation of Sojourners Care Network current facility, Sojourners Care Network shall utilize the alternative location of 62969 U.S. Highway 50 McArthur, Ohio 45651.

Communication Plan

The primary communication plan, in the event of a large-scale disaster, shall utilize the current network of land-based and mobile telephone devices. The current network is capable of connecting all members of the foster care program immediately. In the event land-based and mobile phone networks are unavailable, a centralized meeting place shall be established at the alternative work location of 62969 U.S. Highway 50 McArthur, Ohio 45651.

Tracking Clients and Caregivers / Maintenance of Records

Sojourners Care Network maintains physical and digital records of clients and caregivers locally, as well as remotely, in order to ensure proper tracking of all young people and caregivers. Maintenance of physical and digital records of clients and caregivers shall be the responsibility of the Sojourners Administrator, to be stored off-site in the event of a disaster. These items shall be stored and maintained in accordance with policy #12 ("Confidentiality of Young People and Foster Caregivers").

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Revised: 12-7-16

FF/Tx Policy #83



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #84**

**Adoption Services
5101:2-5-13(A)(24)(25)(26)
5101:2-33-13
5101:2-42-65
5101:2-48-05(A)(B)
5101:2-48-18(B)**

Purpose:

To describe the agency's adoption services, which shall be made available to individuals interested in adoption services.

Policy:

Geographic Area

Sojourners is committed to providing a range of adoption services, including homestudy assessments, to the region of southeast Ohio. In addition, Sojourners may provide may conduct homestudy assessments for agency foster caregivers or partners who are located in central and eastern Ohio.

Adoption Application Process

As outlined in SCN FCG Policy #4, entitled "Assessment, Approval, and Documentation of Foster Care and Adoption Applicants," The process for adoption application, eligibility requirements for adoptive applicant(s), the timeframe for commencing and completing an adoption homestudy, the process for simultaneously certifying an applicant for foster care placement, and approving an applicant for adoption are outlined in accordance with ORC 5101:2-48-05. Information regarding the recruitment process for foster and adoptive caregivers is outlined in SCN FCG policy #5, entitled "Foster and Adoptive Caregiver Recruitment." SCN FCG policy #28, entitled "Grievance Policy" describes the procedures for adoptive applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) to file a grievance with Sojourners Care Network.

Approval of a Foster Home for Adoptive Placement

When a foster caregiver who is not an approved to be an adoptive parent through the joint homestudy process expresses an interest in being approved as an adoptive parent, Sojourners or the assigned agency, is responsible for completing the following as outlined in 5101:2-48-11(A)(1):

- Assist the foster caregiver in completing the JFS 01691 ("Application for Child Placement"). The foster caregiver(s) may choose to either complete a new JFS 1691 or complete the applicable section of the 1691 that is on file with Sojourners Care Network. The foster caregiver shall sign the revised JFS 1691 or a new JFS 1691 indicating they would like to be approved for adoption per Ohio Revised Code 5101:2-48-11(A)(1).
- Review and attach the most recent JFS 01653 ("Medical Statement...")
- Complete the appropriate homestudy form (JFS 01673, JFS 01530, etc...)
- All JFS 01385 ("Assessment for Child Placement Update") forms, where applicable
- Foster Home Record

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- BCII and FBI reports
- Case record information and documentation of visits by the assessor to the home

An assessor shall review the JFS 01691, conduct a minimum of one (1) home visit, complete the JFS 01530 (where applicable), complete any sections of the JFS 01673 not completed on the previous homestudy, observe the interaction between the child, foster caregiver, and other members of the household, discuss how the foster caregiver is working with the child on problems which were identified in the case plan and how they will deal with long-term issues the child may have, and discuss the availability of adoption assistance and post-finalization adoption services. Sojourners shall also initiate a search of the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). The aforementioned information shall be compiled and reviewed by the agency assessor and director in order to determine the appropriateness of the foster caregiver for adoptive placement. Sojourners Care Network shall follow procedures contained in rule 5101:2-48-12 in order to determine approval or denial of applicant(s) for adoptive placement by assessor.

If a foster caregiver expresses the desire to adopt a foster child who is and has been residing with the foster caregiver for at least six (6) consecutive months, Sojourners shall provide the foster caregiver with JFS 01692 "Application for Adoption of a Foster Child" The JFS 01692 is a child specific application and shall expire once the foster child is adopted as evidenced by a final decree of adoption or interlocutory decree. Sojourners shall inform the foster caregiver consideration is given to the application if the placement is in the best interests of the child.

Criminal Records Check

In compliance with Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-5-09., and 5101:2-48-10, Ohio Revised Code 2151.86, as well as Policy #4 ("Assessment, Approval, and Documentation of Foster Care and Adoption Applicants"), Sojourners shall request a review of the BCII and FBI criminal records system on prospective adoptive parents and adult members of the prospective adoptive parent's home. Sojourners shall not approve an adoptive placement if the results of the BCII criminal records check or the FBI check indicate that a prospective adoptive parent or, when applicable, any adult who resides with the prospective adoptive parent has been convicted of or pleaded guilty to any of the prohibited offenses. Adoptive parents shall be reimbursed for the cost of any criminal records check by the recommending agency.

Multiple Children / Large Family Assessment

The assessor shall complete the JFS 01530 "Multiple Children / Large Family Assessment" if an approved adoptive parent(s) will have at least five (5) children residing in the prospective adoptive home. The five (5) children includes the child who is to be placed in the home for adoption.

Notification Procedures

In accordance with Policy #23 ("Required Notification by Caregivers to Sojourners"), an adoptive applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) shall notify the agency in writing if a person residing in the home who is twelve (12) years old, but under eighteen (18) years old, has been convicted or pleaded guilty to any prohibited offense or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult, would constitute one of those offenses.

In compliance with Policy #4 ("Assessment, Approval, and Documentation of Foster Care and Adoption Applicants"), Sojourners shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive applicant resides within ten (10) days after the initiation of a homestudy pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-12 of the Administrative Code. In addition, Sojourners shall notify in writing the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parent(s) resides, of an impending adoptive placement no later than ten (10) days prior to the placement of the child pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-16 of the Administrative Code.

Access to Adoption Homestudies

Sojourners shall make its homestudies of all approved families, who have signed the authorization for release of information form, available to any other agency which requests a copy of the homestudy. The homestudy shall be released within fifteen (15) days after a request has been made as long as the authorization for such release has been submitted to the agency.

Maintenance of Homestudies

Upon receipt of an approved adoptive homestudies from other agencies or states, Sojourners shall maintain all documentation for a minimum of five (5) years.

Compliant Procedure

Adoptive applicants, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families may submit in accordance with Policy #28 (“Grievance Policy”) and Ohio Administrative Code 5101:2-48-24. The requirements of 5101:2-33-03 (“Procedure for complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies or practices in the foster care or adoption process that involve race, color or national origin.”) supercede the requirements of this rule when the grievance or complaint involve alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices pertaining to the foster care or adoption process that involves race, color, or national origin. Procedures for complaints of alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices are detailed in Policy #79.

Open Adoptions

Sojourners strongly believes that successful adoptions include well-supported openness between the adoptive parent(s) and the birth family, where it is in the child’s best interest. Sojourners adoptive parents, in conjunction with Sojourners, shall ensure monthly communication (e.g., written, phone, and/or in-person visitation) with the at least one (1) natural family relative, throughout pre-finalization and for a minimum of one (1) year after placement, except where it is documented that it would not be in the child’s best interest. In instances where it may not be in the child’s best interests, written documentation must be provided by the child, the child’s guardian or PCSA representative, counselor, guardian ad-litem, or other professional involved in the youth’s life.

Reporting False Statements

Sojourners upon an internal investigation shall refer all cases to the county prosecutor in which there is probable cause to believe that falsification of an adoptive application or homestudy has been committed under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. Sojourners shall report in writing a person who knowingly makes a false statement on an application or homestudy document during the homestudy process to the agency administrator or designee within three (3) days of the assessor’s determination of possible falsification. The written statement shall include, but is not limited to the original application completed by the applicant and documentation verifying the information reported on the application or in the homestudy by the applicant is knowingly false.

A notification letter shall be sent by the administrator within ten (10) days of the determination of potential falsification to the adoptive applicant or approved adoptive parent(s) indicating that the information submitted to the agency had been determined to be knowingly false. The notice shall include procedures for an agency review and shall include all of the following information:

- Date notification letter is prepared by the assessor.
- Mailing address of the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s.)
- A statement indicating the homestudy process will discontinue because the agency has probable cause to believe the information provided by the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) on the JFS 01691, “Application for the Placement of a Child” (rev. 12/2006) or during the homestudy process is knowingly false.
- If the homestudy has already been completed, the agency shall include a statement informing the applicants(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) that, in the event that

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allegations of falsification are reported, the agency will not file the homestudy with the court for finalization services, release a homestudy for sharing or transferring, or present the family at a matching conference.

- A copy of the information that is alleged knowingly false.
- Documentation verifying the information submitted on the JFS 01691 or during the homestudy process that is knowingly false.
- A statement indicating that all cases in which it is determined by the agency the applicant or approved adoptive family made knowingly false statements will be referred to the county prosecutor office in the county the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) reside.
- The applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) right to an agency review to respond to the alleged falsification.
- A statement indicating that if the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) fails to respond within the ten (10) day period the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) application is withdrawn, and the action of refusing to respond to allegations of knowingly making false statement(s) has resulted in the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) selecting themselves out of continuing the homestudy process.
- The notification letter shall be mailed to the applicant by certified mail.

If the applicant responds within ten (10) days of the date of receipt of the written notice alleging falsification, the agency is responsible for reviewing information received from the adoptive applicant within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the applicant(s) response. Sojourners shall conduct an internal investigation including a face-to-face visit with the adoptive applicant and witnesses. Issuance of a final investigatory report will be provided to the adoptive applicant(s), which shall include:

- Explanation of the allegation of falsification
- Any and all background information deemed relevant by Sojourners Care Network
- Results of the investigation, including whether probable cause was found to indicate the applicant(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) made knowingly false statements
- Any action steps to be taken by the applicant(s,) adoptive parent(s,) or the agency as a result of the investigation

Sojourners shall provide written notification within thirty (30) days to the adoptive applicant(s) or adoptive parent(s) of any action taken.

Upon completion of the final investigation report and the agency determines there has been no falsification made by the applicant(s), Sojourners shall resume the homestudy process if the applicant(s) chooses to proceed. The homestudy shall be completed within one hundred eighty (180) days from re-commencement.

When an adoptive child is placed in an approved adoptive parent(s) home and the adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) knowingly made a false statement that results in the assessor's reassessment of an approved or updated homestudy, the prospective adoptive parent(s) or other household member(s) is guilty of the offense of falsification under section 2921.13 of the Revised Code. The assessor shall report incidents of falsification according to the procedures listed above. The agency administrator or designee must determine in twenty-four (24) hours of completing the agency's internal investigation, if there is probable cause related to the adoptive child's safety and well-being to remove the child from the adoptive parent(s) home until the result of an investigation is rendered.

Adoption Assistance

Sojourners shall provide each applicant the JFS 01985 ("Adoption Subsidies Guide"). The following subsidies are also available.

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Post Adoption Special Services Subsidy

The Post-Adoption Special Services Subsidy (PASSS) program is for all adoptive families in Ohio whose children may be experiencing adoption-related difficulties or issues that were preexisting, but were not apparent at the time of adoption. Such services are available to prevent the disruption of an adoption. PASSS services may include:

- Medical services
- Psychological services
- Psychiatric services
- Counseling expense
- Residential treatment

Title IV-E Adoption Subsidy

Title IV-E Federal Adoption Subsidy program provides federal financial support for children placed for adoption who meet the eligibility criteria. In order for a child to be eligible for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance, a PCSA must determine and document that:

- The child meets special needs status
- At the time the child came into custody of the PCSA or private child placement agency, and at the time adoption proceedings were initiated, the child would have been eligible for Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) or is determined eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits by the Social Security Administration prior to the finalization of adoption.

In addition to a monthly monetary payment, these children are eligible for medical coverage under Medicaid and may be eligible to receive assistance and services under the federal Title XX program. Applications for the Title IV-E subsidy must be completed by the adoptive family prior to adoption finalization. The amount of adoption assistance is determined by negotiation and mutual agreement between the adoptive parent(s) and the PCSA. For more information, please contact your county's PCSA.

State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy Program

The State Adoption Maintenance Subsidy Program is a financial program that provides monthly maintenance subsidy payments to adoptive families adopting children who meet the special needs criteria that is defined in the Ohio Administrative Code rules and who are not eligible for Title IV-E Adoption Assistance. The PCSA in your county is responsible for administering and determining eligibility for the State Adoption Subsidy Program. Applications must be completed by the adoptive family prior to finalization.

The family's income is taken into consideration when determining eligibility for the State Maintenance Subsidy. The child may also be eligible for medical coverage under Medicaid. Contact your adoption caseworker to learn more about obtaining the State Adoption Subsidy Program.

Non-Recurring Adoption Expense Subsidy

The Non-Recurring Adoption Expense is designed to promote the adoption of special needs children by providing eligible families the opportunity for reimbursement of certain costs related to adopting a child with special needs. Non-recurring adoption expenses are those one-time expenses directly related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs. The program provides reimbursement, up to a certain amount, for expenses such as supervision of placements prior to the adoption, attorney's fees, court costs, transportation costs, and the reasonable costs of lodging and foods. Reimbursement is also available for costs associated with the adoption homestudy and reasonable and necessary adoption fees. The adoptive family's income is not taken into consideration when determining whether payments for non-recurring expenses should

be paid. Applications and agreements for the Non-Recurring Adoption Expense Subsidy must be completed by the adoptive family prior to adoption finalization.

Adoption Tax Benefits

The federal government and the state of Ohio allow families who adopt to receive a non-refundable tax credit for the year in which the adoption was legalized. Many foster and adoptive parents are eligible for tax benefits. The Hope for Children Act (Public Law 107-16) increases the previous \$5,000 adoption tax credit to \$10,000. All adoptive parents should meet with a tax advisor to discuss tax benefits (Application forms are available through the IRS and the State Treasurer's Office).

Fees for Service

Sojourners shall maintain a fee structure that is inclusive to all potential and approved adoptive caregivers. The fee structure shall allow parents of various income levels the opportunity to adopt. Fees shall be assessed using a standardized, uniformly applied sliding scale based on the family's ability to pay. The ability to pay a fee shall not influence the choice of the most appropriate parent(s) for a child. The current fee structure shall be provided to prospective caregivers within seven (7) days of initial inquiry.

Pre-Finalization and Post-Finalization Services

Pre-Finalization Services

Sojourners shall support the child's affiliated Public Children's Services Agency in the provision of pre-finalization services to address adoption-related issues, as references in OAC 5101:2-42-65. These adoption-related issues to explore with the child shall include, but not be limited to:

- Biological and Social Information
- Substitute Care Placement History
- Self-Esteem Issues
- Separation and Attachment Issues
- Feelings Concerning Adoption
- Lifebook Materials
- Open Adoption (if applicable)

In regards to home-visits, an approved assessor shall conduct, at minimum:

- One (1) face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first seven (7) days of the placement, not including the date of placement.
- One (1) face-to-face visit with the child and adoptive parent(s) in the adoptive home shall be made during the first thirty (30) days of placement, not including the visit during the first seven (7) days of placement.
- After the first thirty (30) days, one (1) visit per month with the adoptive family and adoptee(s) shall be made.
- One (1) face-to-face visit in the home with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home shall be made every sixty (60) days.
- Two (2) face-to-face visits in the home prior to finalization with any household member whose permanent residence is the adoptive home although he or she may temporarily reside elsewhere. No less than sixty (60) days between visits.

During each visit, the assessor shall gather information on how the placement is progressing from the child, as appropriate to his or her ability to communicate, the adoptive parent(s) and other household members, in applicable visits. All contacts and visits shall be documented in the child's case record and address the following:

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- The child's safety and well-being within the adoptive home. In assessing the child's safety and well-being, the assessor shall consider the following through observation and individualized interviews with each person obtained during the visit:
 - The child's current behavior and emotional and social functioning in the adoptive home and any other settings.
 - The child's adjustment to the placement.
 - The child's feelings around loss, separation and the reasons for being adopted.
- Any new information regarding the child, the adoptive parent(s) or the other household members, including, but not limited to:
 - Changes in the marital status.
 - Significant changes in the health status of a household member.
 - Placement of additional children.
 - Birth of a child.
 - Death of a child or household member.
 - A criminal charge, conviction or arrest of the child, adoptive parent(s) or any household member.
 - Addition or removal of temporary or permanent household members.
 - Family's relocation.
 - Child's daily activities.
 - A change in the adoptive parent(s) employment or any financial hardships.
 - Any supportive services needs for the child or adoptive parent(s) to assure the child's safety and well-being.

For a child who is placed through the "Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children" into an approved adoptive home outside of Ohio:

- Request the out-of-state children services agency (CSA) to conduct visits with the adoptive family in the home as identified in this rule and to submit written supervisory reports on a monthly basis.
- At a minimum, one (1) face to face visit shall be conducted by the assessor within the PCSA or PCPA who is responsible for the child's case, or another assessor employed or contracted by the PCSA or PCPA who has been delegated to act on behalf of the assigned assessor in his or her absence once every six month period prior to the finalization of the adoption.
- The assessor shall observe and document the interaction between the adoptive child, the adoptive parent and all other household members pursuant to this rule.

Post-Finalization Services

In accordance with OAC 5101:2-48-18, Sojourners shall make post-finalization adoption services available, upon request to the birth parent(s), adoptive parent(s), and/or adoptee(s). These services may be conduct directly or through referral, as appropriate.

Where Sojourners is providing the post-finalization services, the assessor(s) shall determine, in conjunction with the adoptive parent and adoptee(s), the frequency and duration of post-finalization services. These visits shall be documented regarding the progress of the child's placement, the child's safety and well-being in the adoptive home, and new information regarding the child or family.

In the event Sojourners refers the post-finalization services to another agency, Sojourners shall:

- Refer each person who requests post-finalization adoption services to an agency that provides such services.
- Upon written request of a parent, legal custodian, or guardian, provide consultation on adoption-related issues to non-agency professionals who are working with the family.
- Provide information regarding the procedures for releasing identifying information pursuant to rules 5101:2-48-19 and rule 5101:2-48-20 of the Administrative Code.

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Availability of a State Hearing

Applicant(s) may request a state hearing in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 5101.35, if the applicant(s) believes that an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely for the reason of geographic location of the family.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy # 85**

**Required Notifications to Custodial Agencies
5101:2-5-13(A)(28)**

Purpose

To describe the requirements of notification to custodial agencies of children in care.

Policy:

If a Sojourners foster home is providing care for a child in the custody of another agency (e.g., Children's Services, Juvenile Court), Sojourners shall have notify the custodial agency if any of the following incidents occur:

- A serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the foster child.
- The death of the foster child.
- Removal or attempted removal of the foster child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency.
- Any involvement of the foster child with law enforcement authorities.
- Unauthorized absence of the foster child from the home. This notification is required to be made immediately, but no late than twenty-four (24) hours from the time Sojourners became aware of the unauthorized absence.



**Sojourners Care Network
FCG Policy #86**

**Meals
5101:2-7-06**

Purpose:

To outline the specific requirements for meals for young people in foster care.

Policy:

- (A) A foster home shall comply with the following meal requirements:
- (1) Each foster child shall be provided with three meals a day.
 - (2) Each meal shall be served at regular intervals.
 - (3) Each meal shall conform to any religious dietary restrictions or any other dietary restrictions.
 - (4) Each meal shall be provided in accordance with any special instructions prescribed by the foster child's physician.
 - (5) Food provided to a foster child shall be nutritious, well-balanced, and available in sufficient quantity.
 - (6) A nutritious snack shall be available to children between meals.
- (B) A foster child shall not be denied the opportunity to eat with other members of the foster home.
- (C) Each foster home shall use milk that meets the requirements of state laws and local ordinances or regulations for pasteurized or certified milk.