

Orientation

Preservice

Learner Guide

October 2022

Version 1.0

(Slight modifications are made to materials for use with an live-instructor.)





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- # Preservice: Orientation

This image shows a vertical sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's part of a bound notebook or folder.

Introduction

Congratulations on starting your journey to becoming a foster, kinship, or adoptive family. One of the first steps in the approval process is completion of the Preservice training series.



Two helpful websites:
[It Take’s Heart Ohio](#)
[Caregiver’s Corner](#)

The Preservice Training Series

The OCWPT Preservice Curriculum is a **24-hour training series**. (NOAS Families – 25.5)

At the conclusion of the training series, you will be able to **accurately self-assess** if caregiving or adoption is the right choice for your family.

Each person whose name will appear on the certificate must take the preservice training in full.

Notes:

Family Assessment – Homestudy

In your own words, explain the purpose of the **Homestudy**.

Notes:

[illegible]

Basic elements of the Homestudy include:

- Paperwork packet
- References
- Home fire inspection and safety audit
- Interviews
- Criminal background check

There are some **felony convictions** that disqualify you from fostering or adopting. Other felonies and certain misdemeanor offenses require you to meet **rehabilitation standards**.

Make sure you attend your agency's policy and procedures training. Every agency operates a little differently.

The Homestudy is a **mutual assessment** process. You can view the Homestudy information that is not deemed confidential by the agency. There should be no surprises.

Demographics of Children in Care

FOSTER CARE DEMOGRAPHICS

As you explore if caregiving or adoption is right for your family, you may wonder how many children need homes and what those children might be like.

This section answers some of the most frequently asked questions from potential caregivers. Please note, percentages are approximate so may not add up to 100%.

How many reports of possible maltreatment do children services agencies receive?

There were approximately **142,000 reports** to Ohio children services agencies in 2021 (ODJFS data dashboard, 1-21). In about 56% of the cases, it was determined that no further investigation was needed.

While it is extremely important to report suspicions of child maltreatment, about half the time the report will not warrant an investigation.

There can be more than one reason a child is removed from their home. Reasons children were removed in Ohio in 2021 (ODJFS data dashboard, 1-21).

Abuse – Approximately **1,900 children were removed for abuse**, including physical abuse and sexual abuse, domestic violence and emotional maltreatment/mental injury (ORC 2151.031).

Neglect – Approximately **3,500 children were removed for neglect** including abandonment, refusal to provide proper or necessary care, injury or threat of harm due to the omission of the parent.

Family Issues – Approximately **6,500 children were removed for parental/family issues**. This includes the child being removed for any of the following: parental drug or alcohol abuse, inadequate family housing, the inability for a parent to cope with their ongoing mental health concerns and the incarceration or death of a parent. A high percentage of these removals involved substance misuse by the parents.

Multi-System Youth –The Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO) surveyed agencies in 2021 and found that **24% of children in care were diverted from juvenile corrections** (9.3%), or entered care primarily due to a behavioral health need (12.1%) or developmental/ intellectual disabilities (2.4%) (PCSAO, 2022).

There are many reasons children come into care. Parental/family issues are the most common. Substance misuse is a factor in many cases.

How many children are in care?

There were over **15,300 children** in care in Ohio as of January 2021 (ODJFS data dashboard, 1-21).

- About 67% were in temporary care of the agency, most likely with a goal of reunification.
- About 23% were in permanent custody of the agency, which means they are legally free for adoption.
- About 4% were in a Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (PPLA). PPLA is an option for older youth for whom neither adoption nor reunification is a good option.

Type of care –

- About 54% were in foster care.
- Almost 27% were in kinship care; Kin are relatives or non-relatives with a long-standing relationship with the child or birth family.
- About 3% were in an adoptive placement.
- Almost 13% were in a group home or residential center.

Most children in temporary custody are placed in foster care, but a significant amount are in kinship care and this number is growing.

What are the ages of children in care?

(ODJFS dashboard)

- **Under 1:** 1,100
- **1-6:** approximately 5,600
- **7-12:** approximately 3,700
- **13-18:** approximately 4,500

The majority of children in care are school-agers and teens.

What are the races of children in custody?

(PCSAO Factbook point in time data from 7/1/2020)

- 55% White
- 31% African-American
- 13% Multiracial
- 1% Unknown/unreported

The majority of the children in custody are white, but a significant number of children are Black or multiracial. It should be noted that Black and multiracial children are represented at much higher rates in the child protection system compared to their representation in Ohio's general population. We will discuss disproportionality of representation later in the training series.

What are the needs of the children in care?

The needs of the children can vary.

Trauma – Studies confirm anecdotal evidence that most, if not all, children in care have experienced trauma, and many of them have experienced multiple traumas (Greeson et al., 2011; Dorsey, et al. 2012). These trauma experiences can affect development, emotions, and behavior.

Mental Health – Some studies suggest that more than 80% of youth in foster care experience a mental health condition or acute need related to trauma (Halfon et al., 1995; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016a, 2016b as cited in Miller et al 2019).

Health Conditions – Some children in care may have medical conditions or disabilities that will require specialized medical care or supplies, therapy, and educational services.

Education – Unfortunately, children will move placements for a variety of reasons. It is estimated that with each move, they lose about 4-6 months of academic progress. Many of these children work below their grade level and require special education services. (Child Trends Data Bank, 2015; Foster Care and Education National Work Group, 2014, Hill, 2013; Lambros, Hurley, Hurlburt, Zhang, & Leslie, 2010; Larson & Anderson, 2005; United Cerebral Palsy and Children's Rights, 2006 as cited in Miller et al 2019).

Complex Needs – Ohio is completing implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, which reduces the number of youths in residential programs by transitioning them to therapeutic foster care (Tullberg, Vaughn, Muradwij, & Kerker, 2019). As a result, foster parents will provide care to children with complex emotional and caregiving needs (Whitt-Woosley et al 2020).

Crossover Youth – Youth who are involved in both the child protection and juvenile justice systems are often referred to as crossover youth. It is estimated that up to 29% of children involved in the child protection system also have cases in the juvenile justice system (Ohio Juvenile Justice Association, 2015).

The majority of children in care have had significant traumatic experiences that have led to complex needs. In addition, children who historically would have been placed in juvenile detention centers and residential centers are now being placed in foster care.

What are the strengths of children in care?

Many children who have experienced trauma have developed strengths to help them get through the trauma. These include problem solving skills and the ability to read people and sense threat.

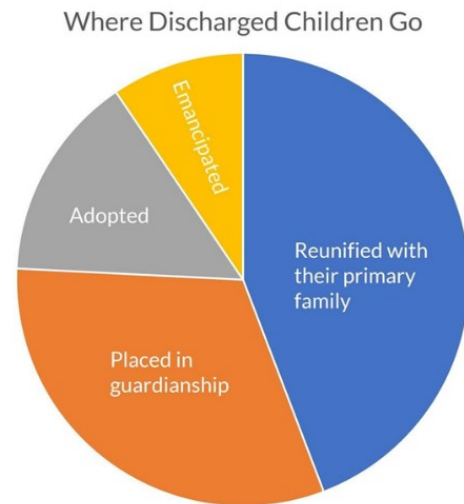
Children who are resilient and have had support and assistance in processing their trauma may be able to make meaning of their trauma and use the experience to create positive outcomes for themselves.

All children have personal strengths. The child's worker will help you identify, and support, the strengths of the child placed in your home.

How many children leave care and where do they go?

7,600 children were discharged from children services in the calendar year 2021 (ODJFS data dashboard, 1-21)

- Approximately 42% were reunified with their primary family
- Approximately 30% were placed in guardianship or went to live with other kin
- Approximately 14% were adopted
- Approximately 9% were emancipated (transitioned out of care)



As you review the child demographics, fill in the blanks with the missing words.

- About half the calls regarding possible maltreatment **do not Warrant an** _____.
- There are many reasons children come into care.
- _____ are the most common. Substance misuse is a factor in many cases.
- Most children in temporary custody of the agency are placed in _____, but many are placed with kin.
- Most children in care are _____.
- A significant number of children in care are _____.

Children of color are overrepresented in the child protection system.

- Most children in care have had significant traumatic experiences that have led to _____.
- All children in care have _____.
- Most children are discharged into the care of the _____
_____.

Was there anything surprising you learned about the demographics of children in care?

Resources

Caregiver's Corner: <https://ocwtpcaregiverscorner.weebly.com/>

ODJFS It Takes Heart: <https://fosterandadopt.jfs.ohio.gov/>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: How Do I Become a Foster Parent?
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/outofhome/resources-fosterfamilies/how-to/>

Ohio Attorney General's Foster Care webpage:
<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/fosterfamilies>

Kinship Family: These are my daughters -
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTTE3EIdpZE>

Maryann's Story - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsLshhETnYk>

Dickey family – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eHEQUAO6NfQ>