

The Caregiver Role and Responsibilities

Preservice

Learner Guide

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Ohio's University Consortium for Child & Adult Services



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Learning Objectives

- Identify the primary members of the child protection team and their roles
- Describe your responsibilities to the agency
- Describe your responsibilities to the child
- Describe your responsibilities to the primary family
- Describe your responsibilities to yourself

Introduction

This is a **broad overview** of some of your key responsibilities. Future courses will discuss your responsibilities in depth.

It is your right to receive **clear expectations** that relate to your role and responsibilities as well as access to a staff member you can ask questions to during and after work hours.

Take a moment to consider **how you are feeling** about taking on the responsibilities of a foster caregiver.

The Team

The child is at the center of the team. You are part of the team. Additional team members include the primary family, kin, agency staff, and professionals from other systems.

Your role on the team is defined by state rules, agency policies, and the Resource Family Bill of Rights.





Your Responsibilities Towards the Caseworker/Agency

You will have **essential information** to provide the agency as you will be the most intimately and consistently connected to the child.

You will be expected to support the **Family Case Plan** and the child's permanency plan.

Reflect on your takeaways from *A Day in the Life* of a Child Protection Caseworker. What did you see or hear that surprised you? What was your biggest lesson learned?

Take a moment to reflect on the following questions after you complete the "call back" activity.

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What criteria did you use to decide who to call back and who could wait?

How did you feel while you were making those decisions?

How do you think each person felt about the urgency of their own requests?

Notes:

How do you think they will interpret your lack of response if they are someone you decided not to call back?

Additional responsibilities towards the agency include maintaining records, protecting the child's confidential information, and participating in court.

What are your feelings and concerns around court participation? What steps can you take to prepare for court?

Your Responsibilities Towards the Child

Your responsibilities towards the child include meeting their **daily needs**, **advocating** for and support needed services, keeping the child **engaged** as a member of the team, and keeping the child **connected** to people and things that are important to them.

You will be given a **per diem** payment to help you meet the child's needs. In addition, children in custody are eligible for **Medicaid** coverage.

The child should **thrive**, not just survive, in your home.



Notes:

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Children in care are entitled to participate in ageappropriate activities. This is called **normalcy**. You will use the **Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard** to decide whether a child can engage in an activity.

What surprised you when reading what youth say about their needs?

To be an **effective advocate**, you need to know your rights and the child's rights, understand the system, effectively document and communicate needs, and use negotiation skills.

As a foster parent, you are **mandated reporter**. You must report any suspicions of maltreatment to the agency hotline.

How do you feel about being a mandated reporter?



Notes:

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Your Role with the Primary Family

One of your most critical responsibilities is to **help the family stay actively involved** with the child and support them in preparing for reunification.

Primary families retain **residual rights** such as visitation, consent to adoption, and determination of the child's religious affiliation.

How are you feeling about partnering with the primary family? How do you think you will approach this partnership?

Responsibilities to Yourself

You should engage in continuous **professional development** by attending trainings on topics you identify as a need. You can also benefit from being coached or mentored by an experienced foster caregiver.

You will be the foundation of support for the child, so you need to maintain your **mental health**. Address your traumas and develop self-regulation skills.

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Notes:



Resources

State foster care rules: <u>https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5101:2-7</u>

State adoption rules: <u>https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5101:2-48</u>

Resource Family Bill of Rights: <u>https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-5101:2-5-35</u>

Right to be Heard toolkit: <u>https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/resources/caregiverNotice/</u> <u>caregiver.pdf</u>

Respecting the Confidentiality of Children in Care: <u>https://wifostercareandadoption.org/library-assets/respecting-confidentiality-children-care-families/</u>

FCCS' Mandated Reporter Guide: <u>https://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/assets/pdf/brochures/reporting-abuse.pdf</u>

Mental Health Considerations for Foster Parents: <u>https://www.verywellmind.com/foster-parenting-mental-health-</u> <u>considerations-5219767</u>

Educational Advocacy: Wrightslaw.com

Mental Health Advocacy: <u>Onoursleeves.org</u>

Disability Advocacy: Disabilityrightsohio.org