



NOAS

PreService:

The Caregiver Role and Responsibilities

Learner Guide

Overview



-  This is a broad overview of some of your key responsibilities as a caregiver. 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.

Learning Objectives




1. The Team
 - Your Responsibilities Towards the
 - Caseworker/Agency
2. Your Responsibilities Towards the
 - Child
3. Your Role with the Primary Family
 - Responsibilities to Yourself

NOTES:

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 (Rule 5101:2-42-20).

Resource Family Rights

-  Your agency is required to inform you of your rights and responsibilities in writing and review applicable agency policies. Nothing in the Bill of Rights supersedes your requirement to follow agency policies.
-  If your rights conflict with the rights of a child in care, the rights of the child will preempt your rights.
-  These rights do not create grounds for civil action against the department, your agency, or the child's custodial agency.

Your Role and Responsibilities Towards the Caseworker/Agency

1. You will be expected to support the services the child needs as identified in the _____. Your agency will let you know your role in supporting the Family Case Plan.
2. You have a right to “actively work with the agency toward the permanency goal” and to “receive _____ prior to court hearings and scheduled meetings” and “be encouraged to share information during those opportunities” (OAC, 2021).
3. You will attend meetings, such as family team meetings and _____ (SARs), and court hearings where the Family Case Plan and permanency goal are discussed, and you will be asked to provide input.
4. You will also be expected to support the visitation plan with the _____, which may include visits with siblings living in different households. This may include transporting to/from visits and some agencies may ask you to observe the parent/child interactions during the visit.

Maintain a good work relationship with caseworkers

1. Different caseworkers will have different preferences and styles of _____. Keep asking questions about their preferences and sharing your preferences. Keep the lines of communication open.
2. You will need to work closely with your agency and the custodial agency, if different, when making decisions about the child's activities and deciding _____ the permissions/consent associated with those activities.
3. Your decisions will be guided by Ohio law, agency policy, and the _____ and Prudent Parenting Standard.
4. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and to be free from _____. If you feel your rights are being violated or you have other concerns, you have a right to be informed of the processes available to submit grievances and/or complaints and to submit your concerns without fear of reprisal (OAC, 2021).
5. It is important to note the child protection system has periods of high rates of turnover.

This may impact you in two ways:

1. You or the child in your home may be reassigned a new _____.
2. Your caseworker may be new to their position and need to consult with coworkers and their supervisor before responding to your questions and requests.

Maintain records and keep confidential information

1. You will need to maintain records for the child in your home, including _____ records, _____ information, and _____ information.
2. You will need to maintain the child's _____, which is a memory book documenting important events, people, and placed in the child's life.
3. All information you receive about the child and their family is confidential. You should never share information or knowingly allow the sharing of information to anyone not involved in the child's care and treatment on an official basis (OAC, 2019). That includes family members and close friends.
4. Information should be only be shared on a _____ basis. The agency will help you determine whether to disclose and what information to share.
5. You should never share identifying or personal information about the child on _____, including photographs, unless your agency's policy explicitly allows this.
6. Make sure you know your agency's _____ regarding record maintenance, confidentiality, and social media. If the agency that holds custody of the child is not your agency, you will need to know that agency's policies too.

Participate in court

- ✚ Federal law requires caregivers are provided notice of, and have a right to be heard, at the child's hearing.
- ✚ You are not required to attend the court proceedings or provide input and you are not automatically a party to the case.
- ✚ However, you will have valuable information about the child that can help the judge make good decisions.
- ✚ Your identity and contact information will not be accessible to the public, including to any party to a case.

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.

The child will need you to recognize...








Coming into care is difficult. They need your help adjusting to the new people, routines, and responsibilities.

There is no such thing as too many nurturing adults in their life. Support their relationship with their primary family.

Their behaviors are often related to their trauma and a way to communicate their needs.







To help a child thrive....

- ✚ Provide a home free from discrimination where they are treated with kindness, consistency, and respect.
- ✚ Be a family and community that accepts and welcomes them as they are.
- ✚ Provide a sense of stability.





-  Offer assistance in helping them understand what has happened to them and why they are in care; preparing them for what might come next.
-  Give them the opportunity to be included in the decisions about their care.
-  Connect them with tools and supports to achieve academic success.
-  Use trauma-informed discipline strategies appropriate to their age and function.
-  Provide them with connections to their culture and history to assist them in forming their identity.
-  Share strategies to help them manage their feelings and behaviors and build their self-esteem.
-  Provide life skills training so they can thrive in adulthood.

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

You will consider:

-  The child's age, maturity, and developmental level
-  The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity
-  The best interest of the child
-  The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth
-  The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible
-  The behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the activity

To be a successful advocate for a child in your care, you need to:

-  Understand the child protection system as well as medical, mental health, and educational systems, especially who the _____ are and how are decisions made.
-  Know what _____ might impact the services your child can receive, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
-  Know your rights and the child's _____.
-  Know how to effectively and communicate needs.

NOTES:

Report any Suspicions of Abuse or Neglect



In Ohio, foster caregivers are mandated reporters, which means once certified, you **must report** any situation with a child for whom you are providing care in which you suspect child abuse or neglect.

You can be prosecuted if you fail to report your suspicions. As long as you are making reports "in good faith" (not deliberately fabricated), you are protected from any criminal or civil prosecution.





1. Call the Hotline

If you do not know your agency's hot line number, you can call the state number – **855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453)** – and be connected to your county.

2. Answer the screener's questions

3. Share all the information you can

Your Role with the Primary Family

-  One of your primary responsibilities on the child's service team is to **engage with the primary family**.
-  Your _____ with the child's primary family is critical to the adjustment of the child into your family and to the achievement of permanency for the child.
-  You will be expected to form a relationship with the primary family and keep them involved in the child's daily life. You will serve as a model and coach to the primary parents in appropriate child _____ techniques.
-  Primary parents hold residual rights while the child is in your care, including the right to reasonable _____, consent to adoption, and the privilege to determine the child's religious affiliation (ORC, 2021).

Responsibilities to Yourself



Continuous Professional Development:

As a member of the child protection team, you will participate in a review with your agency every two years to evaluate your strengths and growth areas.



Maintain Mental Health:

You must address your own mental health needs before you can help the child with their mental health needs.

NOTES:



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FOSTER ♥ CONNECT ♥ SUPPORT
Connections for youth - Support for families



CWTP

Ohio Child Welfare
Training Program

Resources

State foster care rules:

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-5101:2-7>

State adoption rules:

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

Resource Family Bill of Rights:

<https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-5101:2-5-35>

Right to be Heard toolkit:

<https://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/docs/JCS/CFC/resources/caregiverNotice/caregiver.pdf>

Respecting the Confidentiality of Children in Care:

<https://wifostercareandadoption.org/library-assets/respecting-confidentiality-children-care-families/>

FCCS' Mandated Reporter Guide:

<https://childrenservices.franklincountyohio.gov/assets/pdf/brochures/reporting-abuse.pdf>

Mental Health Considerations for Foster Parents:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/foster-parenting-mental-health-considerations-5219767>