

## LCCS POLICY 800

### Assessment, Training and Homestudy Process for Adoptive Families

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<b>Current Effective Date:</b>	12/7/07; 2/17/2009, 2/1/2010, 12/9/14, 12/16/16
<b>Obsolete/Combined Date:</b>	
<b>Reason for Obsoleting/Combining:</b>	
<b>See new Policy #:</b>	

<b>Scope:</b>	This policy will apply to all Placement Services staff.
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Placement Services
<b>Purpose:</b>	To outline Adoption process of Lucas County Children Services.
<b>Legal Cite:</b>	OAC 5101:2-48-01 through 5101:2-48-24; O.R.C. §§ 2151.86, 5101.141, 5103.03, 5103.20, 5104.14, 5153.12, 5153.16, 5153.161, 5153.163, 3107.083, 3107.013, 3107.09, 3107.091, 3107.17, 3107.61, 3107.62, 3107.64, 3107.68, 3107.083

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### POLICY STATEMENT

Lucas County Children Services will provide assessment, training and homestudy services.

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### PROCEDURE

LCCS will complete simultaneous Foster/Adoptive Home Studies for interested and suitable applicants.

LCCS will ensure that the adoption process is in compliance with the provisions of:

- 42 U.S.C. 671(a), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, Pub. L. No. 105-89;
- Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978, 25 U.S.C.A. 1901, et seq.;
- 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) (hereinafter "MEPA"); and
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq. (hereinafter "Title VI").

Provisions of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 supersede above listed acts.

All of LCCS' recruitment activities and materials will 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."

## **GEOGRAPHIC AREA TO BE SERVED**

Adoptive services will be provided to the residents of Lucas County.

Adoption assessments and pre-service training will be provided for Lucas County residents who seek to adopt a "special needs" child.

Courtesy supervision will be provided for any Lucas County family whose child has been placed through a special needs adoptive placement by another county or another state.

Adoption assessments will be conducted for Ohio residents who wish to adopt a Lucas County child with "special needs", and whose county of residence is unable to initiate the homestudy within a reasonable time.

LCCS will conduct adoptive assessments for the staff of out-of-county Children Services.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD**

A "special needs" child is a child who has at least one (1) of the following needs or circumstances, that may be a barrier to a child being sustained in a substitute care placement or adoptive home without financial assistance because the child:

- is a member of a sibling group being adopted together or part of a previously adopted biological sibling group with whom the child should be placed;
- is a member of a minority racial or ethnic group making it difficult to place the child for adoption. However, if the child is between the age of newborn and twelve months the child must be diagnosed to have one of the conditions outlined in OAC 5101:249-03;
- is six (6) years or age or older;
- has remained in the permanent custody of a Public Children Services Agency (PCSA) or a Private Children Placing Agency (PCPA) for more than one (1) year without being placed for adoption;
- has been diagnosed by a qualified professional as defined in OAC 5101:249-03, in the professional's area of expertise. The qualified professional has provided a clear written statement that the child has been diagnosed with one of the following:
  - a developmental disability, as defined in OAC 5123:2-1-02,
  - a developmental delay, as defined in ORC 5122.01,
  - mental illness, as defined in ORC 5122.01,
  - mental retardation, as defined in OAC 5101:2-1-01,
  - a medical condition diagnosed by a qualified physician.
- has a social or medical history establishing a substantial risk for developing one of the conditions as described in the bullet above. The substantial risk makes it difficult to place the child for adoption without adoption assistance. A qualified professional shall determine the substantial risk, as defined in OAC 5101:249-03.

- has been in the home of a prospective adoptive parent(s) for at least twelve consecutive months directly preceding the adoptive placement, and the child would experience severe separation and loss if placed in another setting due to significant ties with the foster parent(s). The emotional ties shall be diagnosed and documented by a qualified mental health professional; or
- has experienced a previous adoption disruption or three or more substitute care placements while in the custody of a PCSA or PCPA.

Note: People seeking to adopt a “non-special needs” child will be referred to other agencies for adoptive services.

## **ADOPTION INQUIRY**

LCCS shall maintain a log of inquiries from persons interested in being adoptive parents. The agency shall document in the log any follow-up for each inquiry.

The agency will, within two (2) business days of an initial inquiry, respond by telephone or in person to the individual making the inquiry.

- Within seven (7) business days of the inquiry, the agency will provide to applicants an introductory letter and instructions for electronic access to a copy of the agency’s adoption policy, and a description of the characteristics and approximate number of waiting children in Ohio; as well as information concerning:
  - JFS 01675 Ohio Adoption Guide (rev. 7/8/13);
  - how to obtain an application for adoption;
  - **The criminal records check requirement pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code.**
    - Criminal records checks are completed at no charge to the applicant.
  - a copy of the adoption policy;
  - foster care/adoption joint homestudy process (simultaneous certification) - see Policy #751;
  - availability of Title IV-E adoption assistance and state adoption subsidy programs;
  - Information regarding the state adoption assistance loan program as outlined in section 3107.018 of the Revised Code;
  - MEPA Complaint Procedures and Standards of Conduct; and
  - A schedule of mandatory pre-service orientation training.

Use of a public computer with internet access will be provided to applicants who do not have internet access or need assistance navigating online. Printed copies of these documents will be provided upon request.

If the inquirer resides out-of-state and:

- has an approved homestudy, LCCS will send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675. If the family has identified a child they are interested in, the family should be given the telephone number to the custodial agency.

- does not have an approved homestudy, LCCS will send the inquirer a copy of the JFS 01675. LCCS shall also inform the inquirer that they will need a completed and approved homestudy from their state of residence in order to adopt an Ohio waiting child.

Note: An inquiry from an Ohio resident who does not meet the requirements for adoption services as identified in LCCS' adoption policy, will be referred to another agency for adoption services. If the inquirer is from an Ohio county other than Lucas County, the referral will include, at a minimum, the name, address, and telephone number of the PCSA in the county of the inquirer's residence.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- **Age:** Applicants must be at least eighteen (18) years of age or older. Applicants must be twenty-one (21) years of age if seeking simultaneous approval for adoptive and foster placements.
- **Financial Requirements:** Adoptive applicants must be able to meet the basic needs of the present family system, such as food, clothing, shelter, and medical services. Financial subsidies are often available to assist with the adoptive special needs child. (See LCCS Policy 240, "Adoption Assistance and Adoption Subsidy Programs").
- **Physical Environment:** Must meet a child's health and safety needs.
- **Religion:** Religious beliefs will only be considered when the adoptive applicants' religious beliefs are such that, the dictates of their beliefs would take precedence over the child's need for food, clothing, shelter, and medical services.
- **History with LCCS:** If a prospective adoptive family has a history of involvement with the agency, that history must be carefully considered in its totality in determining eligibility to adopt. If the history includes any incidents of substantiated and/or indicated abuse or neglect, the prospective adoptive parent(s) may be deemed ineligible.
- **Criminal Record:** All prospective adoptive parents are required to provide a criminal record check as part of the assessment process. The Ohio Administrative Code outlines categories of ineligible adoptive applicants based on their criminal records (OAC 5101:2-48-10).

Note: Eligibility decisions for applicants seeking to adopt a "special needs" child can be appealed if eligibility is denied.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The race, color or national origin of a child being considered for adoption shall not be a consideration by LCCS in determining whether to approve the family's homestudy.

Upon receipt of the completed JFS 01691, the agency will determine if the applicant meets the eligibility requirements.

If LCCS determines that an adoptive homestudy cannot be initiated, the agency will send written notification to the applicant stating the reason for not initiating the homestudy, and a description of procedures for requesting a review of the agency's decision. (The notification will be sent to the applicant no later than fifteen (15) days after the completed application was submitted). (See LCCS Policy #140, "Non-Employee Grievance Review and Resolution").

If LCCS determines that an adoptive homestudy will be initiated and the applicant does not live in Lucas County, the agency will provide written notification to the PCSA in the county in which the prospective adoptive parents reside within ten (10) days after initiation of the homestudy.

If LCCS determines that an adoptive homestudy can be initiated, the agency will send written notification to the applicant. The notification will be sent to the applicant no later than fifteen (15) business days after the completed application was submitted, and will include the need for the following:

- documentation of current marital status such as marriage certificate, divorce decree or other verification of marital status, if applicable;
- a JFS 01681, "Adoptive Applicant Financial Statement," providing information regarding the applicant's income, assets and financial liabilities; and
- a signed JFS 01683, "Adoptive Applicant Authorization for Release of Confidential Information." Police, BCII and FBI record checks are to be completed for each adult resident of the household. \* See note below.
- Proof of age. If the prospective adoptive parent is applying for simultaneous approval for adoptive licensing and certification as a family foster home, applicant must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. (See LCCS policy 751).

\*Note: In addition, LCCS will search the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

In addition:

- There must be completed references from four (4) personal references (three (3) non-relatives) and one (1) employment reference, if applicable, and
- a copy of a medical statement signed by a licensed physician for all members of the household, using JFS 01653 for adoptive parent(s) and JFS 1682 for all others.
- LCCS will not recommend a person to be approved as an adoptive parent if the person has been convicted of any crime listed in rule 5101:2-48-10 of the OAC or has not met conditions of 5101:2-48-10 (D, E, F, G) to the satisfaction of the agency.
- Adoptive applicants(s) or approved adoptive parent(s) shall notify LCCS, 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 offense listed in Appendix A of rule 5101:2-48-10 of the Administrative Code, or has been adjudicated to be a delinquent child for committing an act that if committed by an adult, would constitute one of the those offenses.
- Applicants must show proof of Ohio residence for five (5) years for applicant and all household members.

Upon request, LCCS Adoption staff will assist the applicant in completing the application, and provide assistance to the applicant in securing all required documentation and information.

An applicant will have the opportunity to revise the JFS 01691 at any time regarding the characteristics or number of children desired. If LCCS, based on the revised JFS 01691, determines that the applicant is now seeking a special needs child, requirements and time frames for the applicant and homestudy process will begin with the date that the revised JFS 01691 is received by the agency.

An assessment will not begin until the agency has received all of the required documentation outlined above. The agency will not continue with the adoption application process if the required documents are not submitted to the agency within one (1) year of the receipt of the adoption application or revised application (JFS 01691). LCCS will notify the applicant, in writing, no less than thirty (30) calendar days prior to termination of the application. The notification will contain an explanation of the reason for termination and a description of the procedures for requesting a review of the agency decision.

If the decision is to initiate the assessment, the notification will include a tentative date to begin the assessment process.

### **PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**

LCCS provides the pre-service training as required by the OAC. Pre-service training will address the following components:

- Adoption Process
- Child Development
- Separation and Loss
- Dealing with Behavioral Challenges
- Cultural Issues
- Caring for Children who have Been Sexually Abused
- Adoption-related Issues

The training is designed to:

- assist families in making better determinations about children they could most effectively parent;
- provide information about children with special needs; and
- sensitize adoptive families about the child's relationship with his/her birth family.

LCCS will utilize the same training curriculum for all families.

### **HOMESTUDY PROCESS AND HOMESTUDY UPDATE PROCEDURE**

A homestudy will be a joint decision-making assessment and process between the applicant and LCCS. The process is designed to determine whether adoptive care is a viable option for the applicant and the characteristics of children the applicant can best parent.

All adoption homestudies will be documented on the JFS 01673, "Assessment for Child Placement."

An adoption assessor will conduct homestudies completed by LCCS.

### **ADOPTION HOMESTUDY PROCESS**

The homestudy process will include the following:

- a series of educational sessions designed to provide the family with information and a support system to be used in the pre- and post-adoptive period;

- at least one (1) face-to-face individual interview with each member of the household, with at least one (1) of these interviews taking place in the adoptive applicant's home;
- a written assessment of the family's strengths and weaknesses as they pertain to parenting abilities; and
- an overall assessment of the family's capabilities to support the child's basic needs to include, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter and medical services.

#### **DOCUMENTS COMPLETED AND ATTACHED TO HOMESTUDY**

- JFS 01653 "Medical Statement for Foster/Adoption Applicant and All Household Members" signed by a licensed physician;
- four (4) personal reference statements (three (3) from non-relatives) for each applicant to determine the applicant's suitability to parent a child;
- JFS 01348 "Safety Audit of a Family Foster Home"; and
- JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement" - This form determines the family's ability to provide for the child and to determine the need for an adoption subsidy.
- The Bureau of Identification and Investigation (BCII) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reports.
- Completed water test, if required; and
- a fire inspection.

#### **ADOPTION HOMESTUDY TIMEFRAMES**

Upon completion of orientation and/or required training and receipt of application (JFS 01691), LCCS will initiate and complete assessment as follows:

- General (if special needs) – within 180 calendar days
- Relative Assessment – within 90 calendar days
- Foster to Adopt Conversion – within 30 calendar days of receipt of application and required paperwork
- Homestudies for children who are not special needs may take up to two years to complete.

The assessor will complete a homestudy report on the JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement" and provide written notification to the applicant of approval or denial.

#### **ASSESSOR RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS AT COMPLETION OF HOMESTUDY**

The assessor will arrive at one (1) or more of the following recommendations at the completion of the homestudy:

- approve the applicants as adoptive parents only;
- recommend the certification of the applicants as foster parents;
- approve the applicants as adoptive parents and recommend the certification of the applicants as foster parents simultaneously;
- deny the adoption application;

- recommend that the certification for foster care not be approved; or
- deny the adoption application and recommend that the certification for foster care not be approved.

The agency will notify the applicant, by letter, the date of approval or denial for their adoptive assessment within ten (10) days of the completion of the assessment.

- If approved, a description of the characteristics of the child or children for whom the applicant is being approved.
- If denied, an explanation will be given to the family and the procedure for requesting a review of this decision will be provided.

### **PRE-ADOPTION SERVICES**

Once a family has been approved for adoption, they are invited to attend training to better prepare them for an adoptive match. The following will occur in order to facilitate that preparation:

- an ongoing foster/adopt training calendar will be mailed quarterly to waiting approved families. They must attend twelve (12) hours of training annually.

### **PRE-FINALIZATION SERVICES**

Pre-finalization services will be provided to the adoptive parent(s) and child (ren) from the date of the adoptive placement of the child to the day of finalization.

LCCS adoption assessors will provide or arrange for, at a minimum, the following pre-finalization services, as applicable:

- Case Management
- Counseling
- Crisis Services
- Diagnostic Services
- Therapeutic Services

### **POST-ADOPTION SERVICES**

LCCS provides post finalization services upon request. LCCS may provide the services directly or by referral. Services may include, but are not limited to, case management services, information and referral, training and/or educational/support groups.

### **HOMESTUDY PROCESS FOR LCCS STAFF**

Agency staff are not allowed to adopt children in the permanent custody of LCCS. See LCCS Policy 145 (Conflict of Interest).

### **HOMESTUDY PROCESS FOR FOSTER PARENTS ADOPTING**



The Licensing Unit staff will meet with the foster family to ensure their understanding of the differences between adoption and foster care, and to assist them in exploring their abilities and needs relative to providing permanency for the child in question.

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, the agency will follow the requirements of OAC 5101:2-48-11.

Foster caregivers will participate in an updated assessment for each child they are interested in adopting. The following information will be compiled, updated as needed and reviewed:

- JFS 01385 "Assessment for Child Placement Update"
- JFS 01530 "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment," as applicable
- JFS 01681 "Applicant Financial Statement"
- JFS 01653 "Medical Summary"
- JFS 01673 "Assessment for Child Placement"
- JFS 01673-A "Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption"
- JFS 01691 "Application for Child Placement" (rev. 6/2009)
- Updated BCII/FBI Criminal Record Check

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, LCCS shall provide the foster caregiver with an JFS 01692 "An Application For Adoption of a Foster Child" (rev. 6/2009), if applicable.

One (1) or more visits will be initiated to update/revise information. During the home visit, discussion will focus on meeting the long-term needs of the child and the availability of adoption subsidy and post-finalization services.

### **ADOPTION HOMESTUDY UPDATE**

Adoptive assessments must be updated no less than every two (2) years. The agency will notify the family of the date of expiration of their homestudy not less than ninety (90), nor more than one hundred twenty (120) calendar days, prior to the expiration of the homestudy.

The homestudy update will be completed prior to the date of expiration.

Adoptive assessment updates will be completed for any applicant who is being considered for adoptive placement of a specific child, and whose adoptive assessment was completed more than twenty-four (24) months prior to the planned placement date. The update will include one (1) or more interviews with all members of the applicant's household, and an assessment of any family changes which might impact the ability of the applicant to successfully parent an adoptive child.

When updating the adoptive homestudy report, the assessor will complete the JFS 01385, "Assessment for Child Placement Update", and conduct face-to-face interviews with the applicant, one (1) of which will take place in the home.

The update will also include a review/updating of the following supportive documentation:

- medical statement of the applicant;
- financial statement;
- Criminal Record Check ( BCII and FBI, if applicable); and
- any additional information that may be defined appropriate by the adoption assessor.

- The agency will complete an update including documentation of all items listed above; an assessment of the adjustment of the previously adopted child (ren), and a discussion with the adoptive family of the impact of an additional child on their family, for an adoptive applicant who has finalized an adoption within the previous two (2) years and who is requesting a subsequent adoptive placement.

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 an 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 adoptive homestudy and the date the approved update will expire.

If the decision of the assessor is to deny the updated adoptive homestudy, the written notification shall contain both of the following:

- (1) A detailed explanation that sets forth the reasons upon which the denial is based.
- (2) Procedures the applicant(s) shall follow for an agency review pursuant to rule 5101:2-48-24 of the Administrative Code.

### **MULTIPLE CHILDREN/LARGE FAMILY ASSESSMENT**

When an applicant seeking to adopt a minor or foster child has at least five (5) children residing in the prospective adoptive home after the minor or foster child to be adopted is placed in the home, LCCS will assign an Adoption assessor to complete the JFS 01530 which is the "Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment."

### **CRITERIA FOR MATCHING ADOPTIVE PARENTS TO AVAILABLE CHILDREN**

- LCCS will consider all approved families equally who have expressed interest in adoption and can meet the best interests and special needs of the child.
- LCCS Adoption workers will review all currently approved adoptive homes to determine which homes can meet a particular child(ren)'s needs, based on the characteristics that the potential adoptive parents have indicated they are able/willing to accept.
- The above identified families will be presented at the matching conference.
- The JFS 01689 will be used to document the structured decision-making process.
- LCCS will consider placing siblings together (see Policy 701).
- LCCS will give preference to an adult relative over a non-related caregiver when determining the placement for a child. If there is no relative that is available or if placement of the child is not determined to be in the child's interest, the foster parent will be given priority consideration for the placement of the child (per OAC 5101:2-48-16).
- When a child placed in a non-agency foster home becomes available for adoption, LCCS will notify the recommending agency and the foster caregiver of the adoption process.

- The minimum length of time between adoptive placements is thirty (30) days. No child can be placed in the adoptive home during the supervisory period without the approval of the LCCS Placement manager.
- LCCS will utilize nondiscriminatory procedures to select approved adoptive families to be presented at the matching conference for available children.
- LCCS will utilize nondiscriminatory procedures to review all approved adoptive families for matching with available children.
- LCCS will utilize nondiscriminatory procedures to match a child with an approved family outside of the agency's jurisdiction.

## **OPEN ADOPTION**

LCCS does arrange and support open adoption where it is appropriate and in the best interest of the child who is in need of placement. LCCS will assess cases for relationships that can and need to be maintained.

Open adoption is an agreement entered into by the family of origin and prospective adoptive parents regarding the degree and type of communication exchange that will occur during the adoption process and after finalization.

LCCS will assist in developing the above agreement and easing relationship barriers. LCCS will disseminate information and facilitate contact within the confines of Ohio statutes, rules and regulations.

## **RELEASE OF HOMESTUDY**

LCCS will release its home studies of all approved families, who have signed the authorization for release of information form, to any other agency which requests a copy of the homestudy for matching purposes of a special needs child.

LCCS, upon request from an approved adoptive applicant to release their homestudy to a specific agency and receipt of a signed authorization for Release of Information form, will release all information contained in the homestudy, excluding reference, to the designated agency.

The homestudy will be released within fifteen (15) days after a request has been made as long as the authorization for such release has been submitted to LCCS. The agency date stamps all incoming mail and or requests for information/documents. A dated cover letter will accompany the homestudy and a copy of the dated cover letter will be maintained in the case file.

The applicant may obtain a copy of the home assessment report, excluding references. The request will be made in writing to the LCCS assessor that completed the home assessment report. The supervisor will review that request. The assessor and the supervisor will meet with the applicant for consultation on the home assessment report. This copy is designated for the private review of the applicant and should not be forwarded, by the applicant, to other agencies for consideration as a placement source.

LCCS will not release any homestudy when it has been determined that the homestudy or application contains a false statement.

## **ADOPTION FEES**

LCCS does not charge a fee for providing homestudy services. Upon written request by an approved adoptive family, LCCS will provide, at no cost, copies of the approved home assessment excluding references to the requesting agency. There is no charge for release of the homestudies for those families interested in adopting a "waiting child", as defined by OAC 5101:2-1-01.

LCCS may impose a fee of no more than \$100.00 to an adoptive applicant for the reproduction of the home assessment and supporting documentation for any child who is not a "waiting child."

LCCS will not charge any other PCSA a fee for the release of a homestudy.

### **RECEIVED HOMESTUDY**

LCCS shall maintain approved homestudies received from any other agency in the same manner that adoptive homestudies approved by LCCS are maintained. Specifically, they shall be filed according to the adoptive families' preferences regarding age, gender and race, and shall be maintained for thirty (30) days.

### **OUT OF COUNTY ADOPTIVE PLACEMENT**

LCCS will provide written notification to the PCSA in the county in which the adoptive parents reside of an impending adoptive placement no later than ten (10) days prior to the placement of the children in the adoptive home.

LCCS will notify, in writing, the PCSA in the county in which the adoption applicant resides within ten (10) days after the initiation of a homestudy.

### **ADOPTION HOMESTUDY AMENDMENTS**

If the approved adoptive parent notifies LCCS of any changes or circumstances listed below, the agency shall amend the homestudy.

An approved adoptive parent shall notify LCCS within one hour of any of the following circumstances involving the adoptive child whose adoption is not finalized:

- (1) a serious injury or illness involving medical treatment of the adoptive child;
- (2) the death of the adoptive child;
- (3) unauthorized absence of the adoptive child from the home;
- (4) removal of the adoptive child from the home by any person or agency other than the placing agency, or attempts at such removal; and
- (5) any involvement of the adoptive child with law enforcement authorities.

An adoptive parent shall notify LCCS within twenty-four (24) hours or the next working day if any of the following occur prior to finalization of the adoption of the child:

- (1) a change in the marital status of an approved adoptive parent(s);
- (2) any serious illness or death of an approved adoptive parent(s) or household member;
- (3) the finalization of an adoptive child placed by a different agency;
- (4) a change in the number of household members through birth or kinship who have not reached the age of majority;
- (5) a change in the number of adults residing with the approved adoptive parent (not including an existing household member reaching the age of majority);

- (6) a criminal charge or conviction of an approved adoptive parent or other adult household member(s);
- (7) a significant change in financial status/income; and
- (8) the physical relocation of the approved adoptive parent(s) resulting in a change of address different than the address listed on the most recent homestudy or homestudy update.

## **REVIEW PROCEDURES**

General manner for resolution of complaints begins with the caseworker and follows the chain of command. Most complaints can be resolved in this manner. Those not being resolved will proceed as noted below:

- Complaints from adoptive applicants, prospective adoptive families and adoptive families will be reviewed by LCCS within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of a request for an agency review.
- The review will include a face-to-face meeting with adoptive applicants, prospective adoptive families or adoptive families, adoptive family caseworker and LCCS' Executive director or designee.
- The Executive Director or designee will render a written decision, including the reason for the decision based on evidence presented at the review.
- All participants in the review will receive a copy of the decision within fifteen (15) business days.
- All documentation related to the review will be maintained in both the child's and the family case record.

When an approved adoptive family requests an agency review because the family believes an adoptive placement was denied or will be denied solely on the basis of geographic location, LCCS will notify the family of the availability of a state hearing and provide copies of all materials related to requesting a state hearing.

## **FALSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION OR HOMESTUDY**

If LCCS determines that an applicant made a false statement in the application or homestudy process, the agency will follow procedures in OAC rule 5101:2-33-13.

Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the determination of falsification, a notification letter will be sent to the applicant. The notice will include the applicant's right to an agency review.

If an adoptive child is placed in an approved adoptive parents' home and the adoptive parents or other household members knowingly made a false statement that resulted in the assessor's reassessment of an approved or updated home study, and an internal investigation determines that the adoptive parents or other household member are guilty of the offense of falsification, LCCS will follow procedures outlined in OAC rule 5101:2-33-13. A notification letter will be sent and the notice will include the right to an agency review.

For complaints involving alleged discriminatory acts, policies, or practices that involve race, color or national origin, the procedures contained in rule 5101:2-33-03 of the Administrative Code supersede the requirements of this rule. (See MEPA complaint procedure contained in this policy.)

## **REQUEST TO VERIFY CUSTODY**

LCCS, upon receipt of a signed Authorization for Release from an adult who consents to be adopted, will provide verification of the custody status on the date of requestor's eighteenth (18) birthday.

The following attached and referenced documents are incorporated as part of LCCS' adoption policy:

- [MEPA Complaint Procedure](#)
- [Standards of Conduct regarding MEPA and Title VI](#)
- JFS 01611 – Non-discrimination Requirement for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements
- JFS 01985 – Adoption Subsidies Guide

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## **CASE PRACTICE GUIDES**

*Any amendment/ change to this policy must be submitted to JFS within 10 days following the policy change.*

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## **RELATED POLICIES AND FORMS**

LCCS Policy 145 (Conflict of Interest)  
LCCS Policy 240 (Adoption Assistance & Adoption Subsidy Programs)  
LCCS Policy 701 (Sibling Group Foster Placements)  
LCCS Policy 140 (Non-Employee Grievance Review & Resolution)  
LCCS Policy 751 (Simultaneous Approval of Applicants for Adoption and Foster Care)  
LCCS Policy 751 (Simultaneous Approval of Applicants for Adoption and Foster Care)  
LCCS Policy 801 (Prefinalization Matching and Pre-post Services)  
JFS 01348 (Safety Audit of a Family Foster Home)  
JFS 01385 (Ohio Department of Human Service Assessment for Child Placement Update)  
JFS 01530 (Multiple Children/Large Family Assessment)  
JFS 01653 (Medical Statement for Foster Care/Adoptive Applicant and all Household Members)  
JFS 01673 (Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services Assessment for Child Placement Homestudy)  
JFS 01673-A (Child Characteristics Checklist for Foster Care and/or Adoption)  
JFS 01675 (Ohio Adoption Guide)  
JFS 01681 (Applicant Financial Statement)  
JFS 01691 (Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services Application for Child Placement)  
JFS 01692 (Application for Adoption of a Foster Child)  
JFS 01611 (Non-discrimination Requirement for Foster Care and Adoptive Placements)  
JFS 01985 (Adoption Subsidies Guide)  
OAC 5101:2-7-02 General Requirements for Foster Caregivers and Applicants  
OAC 5101:2-5-20 Initial Application for Child Placement in Foster Care  
OAC 5101:249-03 Special Needs Criteria for Adoption Assistance  
OAC 5123:2-1-02 County Board Administration  
ORC 5122.01 Hospitalization of Mentally Ill Definitions  
OAC 5101:2-1-01 Children Services Definitions of Terms  
[MEPA Complaint Procedure](#)  
[Standards of Conduct regarding MEPA and Title VI](#)