

LCCS POLICY 160

Human Sexuality Information for Children on LCCS Caseload

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Obsolete/Combined Date:	
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See new Policy #:	

Scope:	All service delivery personnel and out-of-home caregivers
Responsibility:	Direct Service Staff
Purpose:	To provide guidelines for agency staff in the provision of information to foster parents, relative caregivers and biological parents, regarding sexuality and birth control to children on our caseload. To provide an environment where the sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression of youth in agency custody is respected.
Legal Cite:	O.R.C. 5101:2-42-19 and 5101:2-42-19.2

POLICY STATEMENT

LCCS will make available information regarding sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases to children in the agency custody who are becoming, or are, sexually active.

LCCS will ensure that the sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression of youth in agency custody will be respected by agency staff and caregivers.

PROCEDURE - including required timeframes and documentation

It will be the worker-of-record's responsibility to determine if it's in the child's best interest to provide information regarding human sexuality. This will be in consultation with relative caregivers, biological parents and foster caregivers. Discussions surrounding the need for this information will be documented in SACWIS activity logs.

After such a formal determination has been made, the caseworker will help with the referral to an appropriate resource, such as Planned Parenthood, primary care physician, or other appropriate resource, for further assessment and consultation. The caseworker will provide follow-through to ensure that necessary information, medical prescriptions, etc., are obtained for the child.

Youth age 14 and older will receive the Casey Life Skills Assessment which contains questions regarding sexuality, safety, preventing pregnancy and STDs. If the results from the assessment suggest a need for information in this area, a goal can be added to the youth's Independent Living Plan under the "Health Education and Risk Prevention" section.

If a caseworker is unable to make an objective needs assessment and subsequent referrals, due to religious or philosophical differences, this will be reported to their immediate supervisor for further direction on the case.

LGBTQ Youth

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or relationship/partnership status categories is prohibited, and under no circumstance is any staff member to attempt to convince an LGBTQ child or youth to reject or modify their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Information related to a child or youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity must be kept private, should not be shared with anyone without the child or youth's express consent, unless otherwise authorized or required by law. In general, staff is prohibited from disclosing a child or youth's sexual orientation and/or gender identity to other individuals or agencies, without the child or youth's permission.

If a youth discloses that he or she is LGBTQ, LCCS staff will show unconditional support for the youth, find the resources that the youth and his or her caregivers need and assist the youth in deciding to whom, where, when and how to communicate their sexual orientation and/or gender identity in order to ensure safety while maintaining privacy.

Staff will work effectively with transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) youth and affirm their gender identities in ways that are most appropriate for the youth, including referring to them by the names and pronouns they prefer and allowing them to dress, groom and express mannerisms consistent with their gender identities. LCCS staff will use inclusive language signaling to the young person that they will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their identity.

When seeking a kinship, foster or adoptive home placement for an LGBTQ young person, LCCS staff will ensure that the home is accepting of LGBTQ people. LCCS will not put LGBTQ youth into placements, services, schools or programs where they will be unsafe or unsupported.

CASE PRACTICE GUIDES

Children on caseloads who are sexually active have the legal right to obtain information about contraception, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, safe sex, abstinence, HIV and on-going education, surrounding the issues of human sexuality without parental or LCCS consent.

Determinations of the type of information needed for sexually active children should be made in consultation with relative caregivers, biological parents and/or foster parents. This should be based on age and level of maturity of the child and degree of sexual activity. Sexual activity should also be monitored for such issues as pregnancy, date rape, HIV, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, contraception and the laws of the State of Ohio regarding abortion in minors.

Staff should not assume that all children and youth in care are straight (i.e. heterosexual), non-transgender, or gender conforming.

RELATED POLICIES and FORMS