

TRAINING POLICY

Each foster caregiver must receive **40 hours** of ongoing training during their two year certification period. Preservice training cannot count toward ongoing training. The agency can waive a total of **eight (8) hours** of ongoing training if the caregiver meets all of the following requirements:

- The foster caregiver(s) have provided foster care for at least two years;
- The foster caregiver(s) have provided foster care for at least 90 days of the 12 months preceding the date of the waiver;
- The foster caregiver(s) have not violated any requirements governing certification of the foster home during the 12 months preceding the date of the waiver;
- The foster caregiver(s) have complied with the training plan.

Each foster caregiver must complete an Individual Training Needs Assessment which will outline the training needs for that caregiver. A Training Plan will be devised for each caregiver based upon the information contained in the ITNA. The Training Plan will cover the caregiver's two year certification period.

LCDJFS will offer training sessions at the agency a minimum of twelve times per year with sessions being held in the evenings and on Saturdays. Training will be offered in a variety of topics. Foster parents must be present at the time the training session commences. No foster parent will be allowed to participate in training if they are more than fifteen (15) minutes late for the session.

Foster parents licensed to provide care for children ages 16-18 are required to have Independent Living Skills training annually.

Other methods of training: reading educational books that are pre-approved by the social worker, participation in the on-line training program through North East Ohio Regional Training Center, and mentoring. Videos and books cannot account for **thirteen (13) hours** of the training requirement. When a book is utilized as a training resource the caregiver must fill out a training evaluation form (see forms section). Mentoring can account for up to 8 hours of continuing training by providing mentoring services to new foster parents when requested by the agency. Appropriate forms must be completed and signed (see forms section for mentoring documentation). All necessary forms must be turned in to the Substitute Care Unit for documentation and approval of training hours.

Foster caregivers who wish to receive training from sources other than those recommended by the Lake County Department of Job and Family Services must submit this request in writing to the Substitute Care Unit, **two (2) weeks prior**, to the planned training, with a course outline and the trainer's qualifications. The Substitute Care Unit Supervisor will determine if the course complies with the training rule and will inform the caregiver of that decision within five working days of the receipt of the request.

TRAINING POLICY (continued)

Failure of foster caregivers to meet the required number of ongoing training hours shall be reviewed to establish “good cause”. Reasons which may constitute “good cause” may be, but are not limited to, a documented illness or critical emergency which would prevent a foster parent from accessing trainings which are offered; a lack of accessible training opportunities; and changes in Ohio Administrative Code Rules which would increase the number of required hours in a restrictive timeframe. If a foster caregiver has served in active duty outside Ohio with a branch of the armed forces of the United States for more than thirty days in the preceding two year period or they served in active duty as a member of the Ohio organized militia, as defined in section 5923.01 of the Revised Code, which includes the Ohio national guard, the Ohio naval militia and the Ohio military reserve, for more than thirty days in the preceding two-year period and that active duty relates to either an emergency in our outside of Ohio or to military duty in or outside of Ohio this would also be considered “good cause” for non-compliance with the training requirement.

When a foster caregiver has not been able to complete the required number of training hours and “good cause” has been established, a corrective action plan shall be developed which will establish a method and timeframe for the foster caregiver to come into compliance. Foster caregivers shall be given a reasonable timeframe to come into compliance - no longer than three months depending on the scheduling of training events. Failure to comply with the corrective action plan in the designated timeframe may result in a recommendation to revoke the foster home certificate in accordance with OAC 5101:2-5-26. The additional time for a caregiver who has served in active duty shall be one month for each month the caregiver was on active duty. Any required training that is not met at the end of a foster caregiver’s certification period applying the preceding sentence shall be waived by the agency. When the waiver of training is approved by an agency under this guideline, the required training for the next certification period shall be the same as for any other caregiver operating a family foster home. The agency shall document any such extension of time in the caregiver’s record.

Failure to obtain the mandated number of training hours prior to the foster caregiver’s recertification will result in the agency denying the recertification and closing the foster home.