



Mahoning County Children Services

222 W. Federal Street, 4th Floor • Youngstown, Ohio 44503 • 330-941-8888 / Fax 330-941-8787

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for inquiring about foster care and adoption opportunities through Mahoning County Children Services. Enclosed you will find information which explain the foster care and adoption program at Mahoning County Children Services and the requirements from the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services.

Foster parents provide temporary homes to children who are in the temporary custody of our agency. The length of stay may vary from a day to several months and the goal is to return the child to the birth parents' home. Adoptive parents provide a permanent home to children through the adoption process. Children are available for adoption through our agency when their birth parents' parental rights have been terminated, either voluntarily or through a court order.

Families can become simultaneously certified as a foster family and approved as an adoptive family in order to become what we call a Dually Licensed Family. In these situations, the family functions as a foster family, assisting the agency to reunite the child with the birth parent, but if those efforts are not successful, adoption by the foster parents can become the plan. The foster and adopt program was developed to reduce the number of moves a child has to make.

Presently in Ohio, there are over 3,200 children who are legally available for adoption and are waiting for permanent families to call their own. These children are in custody due to abuse, neglect, or dependency and on average have waited years for a family. Information regarding children available in Ohio can be found on different county websites. The link to these websites is www.jfs.ohio.gov/County/County_Directory.pdf. For national adoption information you can visit www.adoptuskids.org. For Ohio adoption information you can visit www.adoptionphotolistingohio.org. You may also check our agency listing at www.MahoningKids.com and click on the Children Waiting icon.

The next step in the process is the agency Inquiry Specialist will contact you to discuss the basic requirements and process for fostering and adoption and describe the characteristics of the children who come into the care of the agency.

Our Mission: Mahoning County Children Services, in partnership with the community, is committed to being the leader in protecting children while helping to preserve families.

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Once you have met with our Inquiry Specialist, you will receive a letter stating whether you have been approved or denied to continue the process and you will be invited to attend Pre-Service Training Classes. These classes are available at Mahoning County Children Services and you will be provided with a Pre-Service Training Schedule. The classes are also available in nearby counties (see website: www.ocwtp.net/NEORTC/Foster%20Parent%20Training.html and Northeastern Ohio Adoption Services (see website: www.noas.com). If you access training through another county but still want to work with us, please let our Inquiry Specialist know when you have finished training and you will be provided the necessary paperwork to become licensed foster parents and/or approved as adoptive parents.

If you have any questions after reading the enclosed materials, please feel free to contact our Inquiry Specialist, Meghan Tarantino at 330-941-8888, ext. 2859. She would be happy to answer any questions or provide clarification on any of the enclosed materials or answer your questions. In conclusion, we are excited that you have expressed interest in providing care for the most vulnerable population in our community and look forward to partnering with you to provide these children with safety, permanency and well-being.

Sincerely,

Theresa Pancoe, LISW-S
Foster/Adoption Supervisor