



OREGON YOUTH AUTHORITY

Policy Statement

Part III – Youth Services (Community)



Subject:

Youth Foster Care Eligibility, Referral, Placement, and Safety

Section – Policy Number:

A: General Administration – 3.0

Supersedes:

**III-A-3.0 (12/12)
III-A-3.0 (02/08)**

Effective Date:

01/08/2016

Date of Last Review/Revision:

None

Related Standards and References:

- [OAR 416-530](#) (Youth Offender Foster Care Certification)
- [OYA policy](#): 0-2.3 (Mandatory Youth and Child Abuse Reporting)
III-A-4.0 (Search of Youth and Areas; Processing of Contraband and Evidence in Community Placements)
- [OYA Foster Care Certifier Desk Manual](#)
- [OYA form](#): YA 5026 OYA Foster Youth Monthly Progress Report
YA 5027 OYA Foster Home Performance Review

Related Procedures:

- None

Policy Owner:

Community Resources Manager

Approved:

Fariborz Pakseresht, Director

I. PURPOSE:

This policy describes the purpose of OYA foster care and governs the referral, placement, and safety of youth in OYA foster homes.

II. POLICY DEFINITIONS:

Close-custody facility: Any of the secure facilities operated by OYA, including but not limited to youth correctional facilities (YCF), work/study camps, and transition programs.

Foster home: A home in the community that is certified by OYA and maintained and lived in by a foster parent who models pro-social behavior, engages in activities to promote youth reformation, provides supervision, food, lodging, and clothing for youth in OYA custody.

Foster Home Certifier (Certifier): The OYA staff member that is responsible for the recruitment, training, certification, support and supervision of OYA foster homes.

Foster parent: A person certified by OYA who demonstrates special competence to supervise youth with serious social and/or behavioral maladaptive

characteristics in a youth offender foster home setting. Foster parents provide supervision, food, lodging, and clothing to youth as they progress through their case plans.

Inquiry phone call: Phone calls made by a JPPO to a foster parent to help a JPPO become familiar with a home's structure, approach to working with youth, current milieu, community information, and other general information regarding the home. Referral and placement decisions are not part of inquiry phone calls.

Local Certifier: The Certifier assigned to a specific field office(s).

Multidisciplinary Team (MDT): A team of individuals working collaboratively to develop and maintain a comprehensive individualized case plan that is culturally competent and gender-specific for each youth committed to the Oregon Youth Authority (OYA). The MDT is based on a core team membership consisting of the youth, OYA primary case manager, placement representative, QMHP (facility)/treatment provider (community), tribal representative (for youth enrolled in one of one of Oregon's federally recognized tribes) and the parents/guardians. Additional team members are fluid and are identified by the core team based on the youth's Risk Needs Assessment, identified criminogenic needs and placement.

Placing Certifier: The Certifier assigned to a specific foster home(s).

Wait List (Foster Care): A current list of youth eligible for foster care that are waiting to be placed in a foster home when that resource becomes available.

III. POLICY:

OYA's mission is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments. Critical to the agency's mission is the continual assessment and evaluation of youth in foster care to ensure safety. These activities are essential to guarantee foster homes meet OYA standards and youth receive the level of care expected by the agency. An orderly referral and placement process is also necessary to ensure eligible youth are properly matched with appropriate foster homes.

The purpose of foster care is to provide a structured family living environment that addresses youth's needs, provides accountability, promotes reformation and mitigates community risk for youth who need out-of-home placement or transitional services.

OYA foster parents must model appropriate pro-social behaviors to youth in their care. OYA's levels of foster care and foster parent monitoring requirements are delineated in [Oregon Administrative Rules](#).

This policy provides general standards for foster care referral and placement. The policy also establishes supervision standards for juvenile parole/probation officers (JPPOs), and foster care certifiers (Certifiers).

IV. GENERAL STANDARDS:

A. Determining if a youth is appropriate for foster care

1. A youth's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) must review the youth for foster care placement appropriateness and readiness. If possible, the Local Certifier must be included in the MDT meeting when a youth is being considered for foster care placement.

The MDT must consider the following factors when reviewing a youth for foster care:

- a) Behavioral and emotional stability as evidenced by the following:
 - (1) Absence of recent patterns of aggressive/assaultive behavior;
 - (2) Absence of recent fire-setting behavior;
 - (3) Absence of active psychosis or other acute mental health symptoms; and
 - (4) Absence of current suicidal/self-harm behavior or ideation.
 - b) Readiness for engagement in community-based activities such as public school, work, higher education, and day treatment.
 - c) Evaluated public safety risk in the following areas:
 - (1) Engagement in school/work; and
 - (2) Motivation to engage in reformation opportunities.
2. Exceptions to these factors may be considered by the MDT on a case-by-case basis. The MDT must base the exception on available foster parents' skills, and ability to mitigate the youth's risk while addressing the youth's needs through services and support planning.

B. Referrals

1. A youth's JPPO must determine potential foster care placements after receiving an MDT recommendation for foster care placement. The placement must be based on a review of the current Foster Care Openings List, discussion with the Local or Placing Certifier, review of the Foster Home Directory, and any inquiry phone calls. **Referral and placement decisions are not part of inquiry phone calls.**

The JPPO may consider the following when matching the youth's needs to a foster home:

- a) The youth's criminal history;
 - b) The youth's response to interventions;
 - c) The foster parent(s) skills that effectively address the youth's needs including, but not limited to, culture, religious preference, ethnicity, emotional and behavioral issues;
 - d) The current composition of the foster home; and
 - e) The geographic area of the foster home including the treatment and support resources available.
2. The JPPO must notify the Local or Placing Certifier of each home the JPPO is referring the youth to and ensure that the Certifier has access to the following information to assist in the referral process:
- a) Updated Referral Case Plan or most recent County Reformation Plan/history and background information;
 - b) OYA RNA and ERASOR (if applicable);
 - c) Current service planning information from residential program (if applicable); and
 - d) Most recent mental health assessment, psychological evaluation and any relevant treatment history information (if applicable).
3. The Certifier must contact the JPPO within two business days after receiving the referral to confirm its receipt and clarify the foster home's referral review timeline.

The Certifier and the JPPO must collaboratively evaluate the referral information and discuss the youth's needs while in foster care placement.

4. After the initial contact, the Placing Certifier must contact the JPPO at least once per week to update the JPPO on the referral status.
5. The Placing Certifier must notify foster homes identified as appropriate matches of the referral.
- a) The Placing Certifier must meet with the foster parents to share and discuss referral information.
 - b) If the foster parents agree the youth may be appropriate for the home, the Placing Certifier must notify the JPPO so the JPPO may contact the foster parents.

- c) The Placing Certifier must arrange a screening including the Placing Certifier, foster parents, youth, and (whenever possible) the JPPO and other people notably involved with the youth.
- d) If the youth, foster parents, JPPO, and Certifier agree to the placement, a placement date must be established.

6. Wait List

If there is no available foster care resource, the youth will be placed on a Wait List.

- a) The Wait List must be maintained by the Foster Care Specialist.
- b) JPPOs must place youth on the Wait List through their Local Certifier, except when the referral is for a specific home.
- c) If the referral is for a specific home, the JPPO may place a youth on the Wait List through either a Local Certifier or the Placing Certifier assigned to the home.
- d) The Certifier must place the youth in a foster home as soon as an opening in an appropriate or selected home becomes available.
- e) The Certifier must contact the referring JPPO at least monthly to update the JPPO on the youth's Wait List status.
- f) The Foster Care Unit will continue to assess, identify, and develop additional foster care resources to meet the needs of youth on the Wait List.

C. Placement

- 1. The JPPO is responsible for arranging the youth's placement into the foster home. The JPPO must ensure the foster parent is provided the following youth information prior to or on the placement date:
 - a) Face sheet, including JJIS photo;
 - b) Juvenile Parole/Probation Agreement;
 - c) Case plan and other relevant case information;
 - d) Medical information including health concerns, list of current medications, and immunization records;
 - e) At least a 30-day supply of current medications;

- f) Treatment and service provider information;
 - g) Approved contact and transport list;
 - h) Government-issued identification card (if available);
 - i) Medical card; and
 - j) School transcripts/IEP.
2. The JPPO must ensure the youth's personal property does not exceed OYA's standard travel kit that includes two duffle bags, one toiletry bag, and one plastic tote.

Any exception to this standard must be approved by the youth's JPPO and the foster parent.

D. Ongoing Contact after Placement

1. JPPO

- a) JPPOs must continuously communicate with Certifiers about relevant foster home information and youth placed in the foster home.
- b) The JPPO must communicate with the foster parent(s) at least once per month in person, by e-mail, or phone to review the youth's progress. More frequent contact is advisable when a youth is presenting behavioral or emotional difficulties in the home.
- c) The JPPO is responsible for coordinating in-person or videoconference quarterly MDT meetings with the youth, foster parent(s), Certifier, and any other person working with the youth and deemed appropriate to attend. These meetings must occur every 90 days as prescribed in OYA policy [I-A-11.0 Assessment, Multidisciplinary Team, and Case Planning](#).
- d) The JPPO must document the monthly communication and 90-day face-to-face meetings in the youth's JJIS notebook.
- e) Whenever possible, the JPPO will give reasonable advanced notice to the foster parent(s) when the JPPO plans to discuss pertinent topics, issues, or decisions that may impact the home (e.g., cell phones, dating, unsupervised community time, transition planning) with the youth.

When advanced notice is not possible, the JPPO must provide a synopsis of the discussion to the foster parent(s) within 24 hours after meeting with the youth.

- f) Whenever possible, the JPPO will notify the foster parent(s) within three to five business days in advance when the JPPO intends to meet the youth at the foster home. The advance notice will allow the foster parent(s) time to ensure the youth is in the home for the meeting.

2. Certifier

- a) The Certifier must continuously communicate with JPPOs about relevant foster home information and youth placed in the foster home.
- b) Certifiers must distribute the OYA Foster Youth Monthly Progress Report to appropriate JPPOs every month.
- c) Certifiers must visit their assigned foster homes and make face-to-face contact with the foster parents at least once a month.
 - (1) Visits may be scheduled or unannounced.
 - (2) Certifiers must interview foster parents and complete a review of the foster home based on a YA 5007 Youth Home Certification Safety Requirements Checklist and YA 5027 OYA Foster Home Performance Review.
- d) Certifiers must contact foster parents by phone at least once a week.
- e) Certifiers must document their weekly phone calls and monthly site visits in the Foster Parent(s) JJIS Notebook.

3. Certifiers must ensure Foster Parents -

- a) Maintain ongoing communication with JPPOs and Certifiers about relevant information regarding the foster home and youth placed in the foster home; and
- b) Complete an OYA Foster Youth Monthly Progress Report for each youth placed in the foster home. Reports will be given to the Certifier or sent directly to the youth's JPPO each month.

E. Safety Standards

- 1. Staff must be aware of the below-listed issues and activities during each contact with the youth.
 - a) Safety issues: These include appropriate personal boundaries, threats of harm, home activities or recreation choices (e.g., movie rentals, videogames, computer use).

- b) Supervision issues: These include issues related to proper foster parent supervision of the youth.
 - c) Reformation activities: These include youth's attendance to treatment services; visitation with the youth's family; and the foster parent's modeling of pro-social behavior.
2. Staff must be alert to any safety or health hazards present in the home that may pose a risk to the youth.
- Staff must immediately notify the Certifier of any safety or health risks seen in the foster home.
3. Certifiers must conduct surveys of each youth in foster care every six months.
4. **Any allegation of abuse of a youth caused by a youth, member of the foster home, or foster parent may result in the immediate removal of one or all youth from the home.**
- a) Any suspected or actual abuse of a youth under the age of 18 is subject to mandatory child abuse reporting. Staff must follow OYA policy 0-2.3 (Mandatory Reporting of Youth Abuse and Child Abuse) when reporting alleged child abuse.
 - b) Staff must report any suspected or actual abuse of a youth over the age of 18 to local law enforcement.
 - c) The staff member who became aware of the suspected or actual youth abuse must immediately notify the JPPO, Certifier, Community Resources manager, and field supervisor of the incident.
5. **Any safety or health risks that place a youth in harm or danger as determined by OYA staff may result in the immediate removal of all youth from the foster home.**

F. OYA Foster Care Certifier Desk Manual

Certifiers must refer to the OYA Foster Care Certifier Desk Manual for standards on foster care daily operations, documentation and Certifier responsibilities.

G. Remedy of Foster Home Complaints/Safety and Health Risk Reports

1. Situations that are determined by the Community Resources Manager to be serious and threaten the safety, health, or reformation of youth will lead to the suspension or revocation of the Foster Care Certificate as described in [OAR 416-530-0090](#).

2. Staff must forward all complaints regarding foster parent supervision and care to the Community Resources Manager for review.
3. The Certifier or Community Resource manager must discuss complaints determined by the Community Resources manager to be minor concerns with the foster parent.
4. Complaints determined by the Community Resources manager to be serious concerns must be documented by the Community Resources manager in a formal letter of action to the foster parent. The letter of action must describe the following:
 - a) The issue of concern;
 - b) The action the foster parent must take to remedy the issue;
 - c) The expected date the issue must be remedied; and
 - d) The outcome if the issue is not resolved.
5. OYA may suspend or revoke a foster parent's Foster Care Certificate according to [OAR 416-530-0090](#).

V. LOCAL OPERATING PROTOCOL REQUIRED: NO