

Certification

Background Notes

In Oregon the process of certifying or approving a family as a foster, relative or pre-adoptive family is completed by specially trained staff. In order to assess and support caregivers certification and adoption workers rely on specific OARs:

- 1) Standards for Certification of Foster Parents and Relative Caregivers and Approval of Potential Adoptive Resources and
- 2) Responsibilities for Certification and Supervision of Foster Parents, Relative Caregivers and Approval of Potential Adoptive Resources. These rules are located here: http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual_1/division_200.pdf

However, the responsibility for monitoring a placement for safety, permanency and wellbeing lies with the entire child welfare staff. Cooperation and team work between caseworkers and certification staff is key to a successful placement. DHS has requirements for visiting children in substitute care as well as contact requirements for meeting with foster and relative caregivers. Compliance with the contact requirements aids in ensuring safety for children in care. (See Contact Requirements)

Tasks / Assignments:

- Attend a meeting of the certification unit or if you are in a small branch meet the certifier(s). Find out who manages emergency placement requests.
- Ask the certifiers what foster parents need most from caseworkers.
- Ask the certifiers about how to make contacts in foster homes successful.
- Ask how concerns about foster homes are managed.
- Ask your Supervisor for permission to attend Foundations or any other caregiver training you feel would be of benefit.
- Learn what the office's position is on foster parents transporting children to visits, medical appointments and therapy.

Discoveries:

- *Find out how the certifier and the case worker work together.*
- *Ask how the certification unit matches children and caregivers.*
- *What information does the certification unit need to place a child in a foster or relative family?*
- *What did you learn about foster parents in Foundations training?*
- *What new information did you gain that will assist you in your role in DHS?*
- *How does a concern about a caregiver get reviewed?*