

Home Finding Pre-Service Orientation



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
**HUMAN
SERVICES**

DoHS's Bureau for Social Services



Mission Statement

The Bureau for Social Services promotes the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, supporting individuals to succeed and strengthening families.

Vision

All West Virginians experience safe, stable, healthy lives and thrive in the care of a loving family and community.

Values

Professionalism - personal and professional accountability, community service, customer focus.

Integrity - competence, courage, compassion, ethical conduct, dedication.

Excellence - quality, effectiveness, outcome-oriented, and data-driven decisions.

Relationships - respectful, responsive, collaborative, participatory, follow the parallel process.

Staff Contributions - shared responsibility, equality, inclusion, honor individual differences.

Primary Purposes for Foster Care



Safety, Permanency, Well-Being

- To reunite the child with their family by providing interventions aimed at reunification whenever possible and when the safety of the child can be assured.
- To provide a permanent substitute living arrangement for the child when reunification is not possible. Such an arrangement may include adoption, legal guardianship, or another court-sanctioned permanent living arrangement.

Why do I need a Home Study?

- A home study is a federal requirement enforced by the court for a child who is in the custody of the West Virginia Department of Human Services.
- A home study is an assessment to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MDT)



MDT stands for multidisciplinary treatment team. MDT is both the name of the group of people who meet and the name of the meeting that takes place. The MDT develops, carries out, and monitors a service plan for the family to correct the problems that led to abuse and neglect. The MDT also sends written reports to the judge. The MDT will meet at least once every 3 months until the court decides where the child should be permanently placed.

Who goes to an MDT?

- The Department worker;
- The prosecuting attorney;
- The child's parents or guardians;
- The adult respondents (if they are not parents or guardians);
- Any co-petitioner;
- The lawyers for the respondents;
- The guardian *ad litem* (child's attorney);
- The Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA);
- Anyone who is providing services to the respondents to help them deal with the issues that led to abuse and neglect;
- Appropriate school officials;
- The foster parents or custodial relatives; and
- The child (if old enough and appropriate).

Child Protective Services Responsibilities



Child Protective Services (CPS)

- Places a child with a caregiver.
- Completes the initial safety screening.
- Completes the home study request packet.
- Issues clothing allowance.
- Consents to out-of-state travel.
- Sets up services.
- Meets face-to-face with the child monthly.
- Notifies involved parties about Multidisciplinary Treatment Team (MDT) meetings and court hearings.
- Notifies caregivers of visitation with biological parents.

Home Finding Responsibilities



Home Finding

- Visits the caregiver's home to complete the home study and maintain certification.
- Schedules pre-service training.
- Schedules fingerprinting.
- Assists kinship/relative caregivers understanding their role as caregivers to the child.
- Assists kinship/relative caregivers with necessary safety items such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, if necessary, ladders for two story homes, etc.
- Gathers necessary documents as required through the home study process.
- Should be contacted when changes to the kinship/relative caregiver's home occur during the placement.
- Ensures payments and placements are entered in a timely to ensure financial support.

Financial Support



Families can apply for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at their local DoHS office. These benefits are not based on household income when caring for a relative child. If the child in a home is not blood related, TANF benefits will be issued via a monthly demand payment by a Home Finder.

		TANF Child Only Rates	Per Child Rate	Daily Rate
1	Child	\$417.00	\$417.00	\$13.71
2	Children	\$480.00	\$240.00	\$15.78
3	Children	\$542.00	\$180.67	\$17.82
4	Children	\$612.00	\$153.00	\$20.12
5	Children	\$670.00	\$134.00	\$22.03

- Clothing Allowance (initial, annual, and school)
- School Lunches
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation(NEMT)
- Modivcare

Incentive Payments



A one-time incentive payment will be distributed in two separate demand payments, an initial \$300, and an additional \$200, at different junctures during the home study process to kinship/relative caregivers who have placement.

- The Home Finding Specialist will issue the initial \$300 demand payment to each new kinship/relative caregiver after the preliminary hearing, or no later than 14 days after the placement of the children, whichever occurs first.
- The second portion of the incentive payment, \$200, is to be issued to the kinship/relative caregiver if they achieve certification within 90 days of the receipt of the home study request. The kinship/relative caregiver must complete all necessary certification requirements and submit all corresponding paperwork and documentation within the 90-day timeframe to receive the additional \$200 payment.

Incentive Payments



Approved items/activities for the one-time incentive payment for kinship/relative caregivers:

- Trigger locks/gun safety items
- Smoke/carbon monoxide detectors
- Fire extinguishers
- Fire escape ladders
- Car seats/booster seats
- Cribs/beds
- Bedding
- Electrician/housing inspector (specific to kinship/relative caregivers who are living in mobile homes manufactured before 1976 that would require a waiver)
- Medical examination
- Tuberculosis (TB) testing (if recommended by a physician)
- Home improvements – railing, windows, flooring, windows, doors, cosmetic needs, etc.
- Rabies vaccinations
- Transportation costs such as gas, bus passes, etc., for fingerprinting, medical examination, kinship/relative training, or other certification-related activities
- Child care for kinship/relative training
- First aid kit
- Baby gates
- Electrical outlet covers
- Diapers
- Formula

Contracted Home Finder vs. DoHS Home Finder



DoHS Home Finder

- Every kinship family will be assigned a DoHS Home Finder (even when the study is contracted to another provider).
- The DoHS Home Finder can recommend approval/denial of a study based on policy.
- The DoHS Home Finder will work closely with the child's worker to keep them up to date on the study progress.
- The DoHS Home Finder will maintain a family's certification until permanency.

Contracted Home Finder

- If the Home Finding Supervisor decides to use a contracted worker to complete the study, they will use the same process as the DoHS worker.
- Upon completion of the study, it will be submitted to the DoHS worker for review to ensure things have been completed.
- DoHS may not utilize anyone to complete a family assessment that is not a licensed social worker or provide payment for a home study that does not meet all the necessary requirements, or the time frames set forth in this policy.

Home Study Process



- The child's worker must make the referral for a home study to the Home Finding unit within 24 hours of placement with a kinship/relative caregiver.
- The Home Finding Specialist will make contact with the kinship/relative caregiver.
- Within 72 hours, visit the caregiver within five calendar days of placing a child in the home.
- The Home Finding Specialist must make contact with the kinship/relative caregiver(s) at least once monthly, two of which must be face-to-face contact until certification is achieved.

Home Study Process



At the initial visit, the Home Finding Specialist will do the following:

- Complete the First Encounter Form by doing a safety check of the home.
- Discuss and sign the following expectations/policies:
 - Safe Bathing Practice
 - Safe Sleep Practice
 - Firearm Safety
 - Secondhand Smoke Risk
- Review additional requirements and timeframes associated with the home study certification such as:
 - Protective checks are to be completed immediately (in-state and out-of-state) - *all adults in the home*
 - Schedule fingerprinting - *all adults in the home*
 - Schedule Pre-Service Training - *caretaker(s)*
 - Discuss medical exams that will need to be complete - *caretaker(s)*
 - Obtain references

Home Study Process



- CIB/NCIC Background Checks:
 - Processed by WV CARES; if an ineligible letter is received, WV CARES has a variance process that the adult fingerprinted can request.
- WV CARES also includes the following registry checks:
 - Sex Offender Registry
 - Nurse Registry
- Evaluation of suitability of home and family for fostering/adoption.
- A current medical statement from a physician (any other prescribing physician) is required.
- The Home Finding Specialist will interview all members of the home.
- The Home Finding Specialist has 90 days to complete the home study process.
- It is critical that the Home Finding Specialist and caregivers follow the Gold Standard Process and timeframes to stay on track with completing certification within the 90-day timeframe.
- Additionally, when necessary waivers are identified, obtaining waivers timely is also critical to maintaining the 90-day timeframe.

Certified Caregiver Boarding Care



Age Range	Daily Subsidy Amount	Monthly Subsidy Amount
0-5	\$26	\$790
6-12	\$28	\$851
13-21	\$31	\$942

Direct Deposits are encouraged!

PATH and FACTS Providers Direct Deposit forms can be downloaded from wvsao.gov/electronicpayments/.

PATH and FACTS provider numbers must be obtained by your Home Finding Specialist.

Babysitting

- This may occur when foster/adoptive caregivers need to do activities out of the home.
- Babysitting will be on a short-term basis only, with no overnight stays.
- Prudent Parenting: the foster/adoptive caregiver is responsible for assuring that the person is appropriate to care for the child and for any payments that may be made to the person.

Daycare

- Employed foster caregivers are eligible for daycare subsidy through the Child Care Resource Center (CCRC). Please speak with the child's worker for more information.

Respite

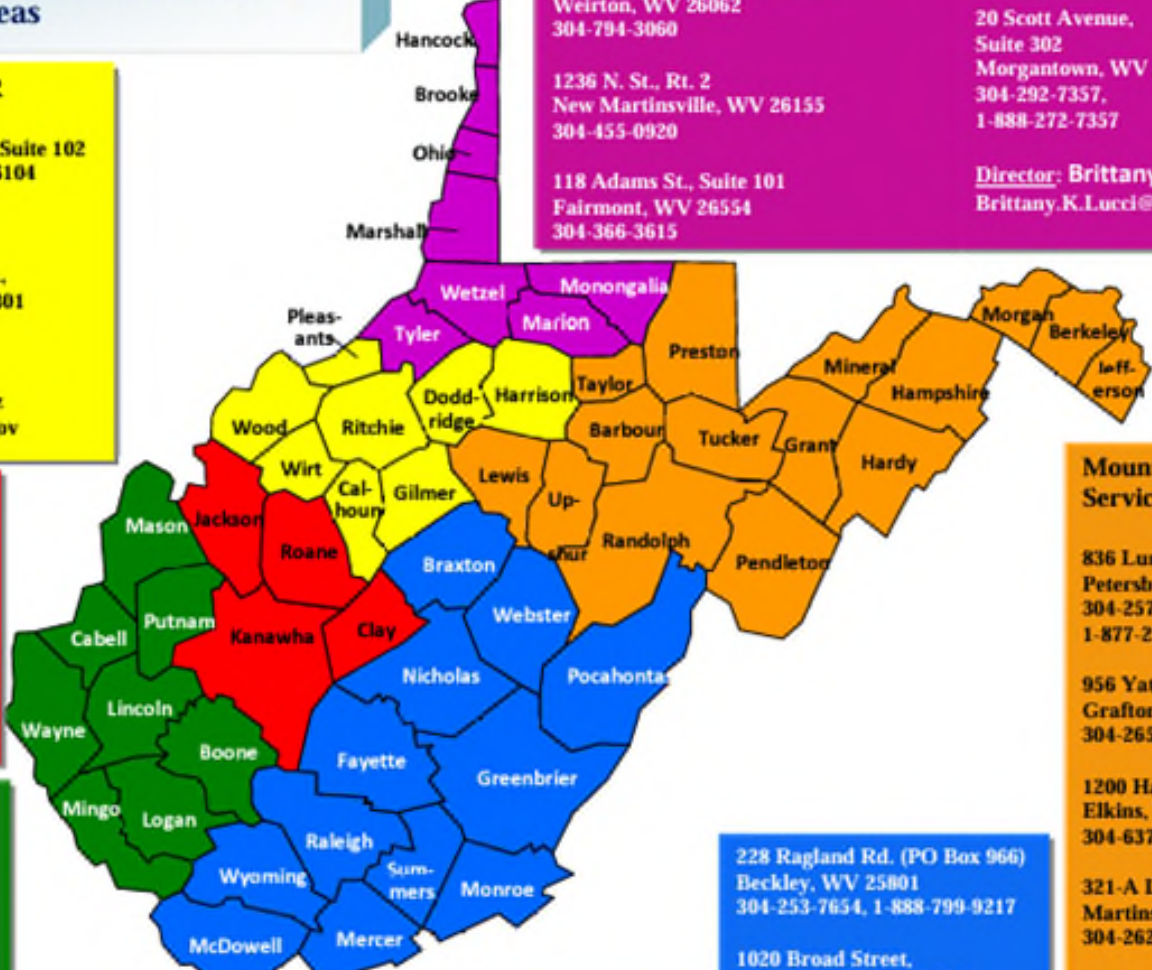
- The purpose of respite care is to make available to foster/adoptive caregivers an opportunity to have time away from caretaking responsibilities.
- Respite may also be used for children to ease stressful situations.
- Kinship/relative caregivers may have someone approved ahead of time if this service is needed.
- Respite is for overnight stays at someone else's home that must be approved by the Home Finding Unit.

Child Care



West Virginia

Child Care Resource and Referral Agency Areas



Choices CCR&R

4421 Emerson Ave., Suite 102
Parkersburg, WV 26104
304-485-2668,
1-866-966-2668

315 North Ohio Ave.,
Clarksburg, WV 26301
304-622-6528,
1-866-622-6528

Director: Kristy Ritz
Kristy.A.Ritz@wv.gov

**Child Care Resource Center
Catholic Charities West Virginia**

2000 Main St., Suite 100
Wheeling, WV 26003
304-232-1603,
1-800-585-1603

100 Municipal Plaza, Suite 600
Weirton, WV 26062
304-794-3060

1236 N. St., Rt. 2
New Martinsville, WV 26155
304-455-0920

118 Adams St., Suite 101
Fairmont, WV 26554
304-366-3615

20 Scott Avenue,
Suite 302
Morgantown, WV 26508
304-292-7357,
1-888-272-7357

Director: Brittany Lucci
Brittany.K.Lucci@wv.gov

Connect CCR&R

1 Player's Club Drive
Charleston, WV 25311
304-414-4488,
1-888-595-8290

Director: Teana Bennett
Teana.D.Bennett@wv.gov

**MountainHeart Community
Services North**

836 Lunice Ck HWY (PO Box 728)
Petersburg, WV 26847
304-257-9375,
1-877-211-KIDS(5437)

956 Yates Avenue (PO Box 32)
Grafton, WV 26354
304-265-0142, 1-877-811-KIDS(5437)

1200 Harrison Ave., Suite 400
Elkins, WV 26241
304-637-2840, 1-877-862-3103

321-A Lutz Avenue
Martinsburg, WV 25404
304-262-1584, 1-888-915-7653

Director: Willetta Bolinger
Willetta.J.Bolinger@wv.gov

Link CCR&R

611 7th Ave., Suite 100
Huntington, WV 25701
304-523-9540,
1-800-894-9540

19 Circle Drive
Logan, WV 25601
304-752-3932

Director: Cristle Dunbar
Cristle.R.Dunbar@wv.gov

**MountainHeart Community
Services South**

228 Ragland Rd. (PO Box 966)
Beckley, WV 25801
304-253-7654, 1-888-799-9217

1020 Broad Street,
Summersville, WV 26651
304-872-9200, 1-866-598-4452

330 Red Oak Shopping Center
Suite 6
Ronceverte, WV 24970
(PO Box 1610
Lewisburg, WV 24901)
304-647-3800, 1-855-843-0720

1411 North Walker Street
Princeton, WV 24740
304-425-3669, 1-800-738-8531

Director: Margaret Younce
Margaret.A.Younce@wv.gov

WVDHHR, Bureau for Children & Families
Updated: June 2022

What is WIC?

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) has been improving pregnancies and preparing kids to learn for 40 years. **The program provides nutrition counseling, parenting advice, breastfeeding support, food assistance, and referrals to help you and your family live a healthy life.**
- WIC is a short-term program designed to improve lifetime nutrition and health for everyone in your family. WIC provides services to married and single parents (working and not working), as well as fathers, mothers, grandparents, foster parents, or legal guardians residing with a child under the age of five.

Women, Infants, and Children



Birth to Three



WV Birth to Three is a statewide system of services and supports for children under three who have a delay in their development, or may be at risk of having a delay, and their family.

The West Virginia Department of Health, through its Bureau for Public Health and the Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health, WV Birth to Three, as the lead agency for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), assures that family-centered, community-based services are available to all eligible children and families at no cost.

How do I make a referral?

To refer a child to the WV Birth to Three system, complete the WVBTT Referral Form or call 1-866-321-4728. You may also [click here](#) to review our regional offices and forward your request to the county that your child and family reside in.

AETNA Better Health



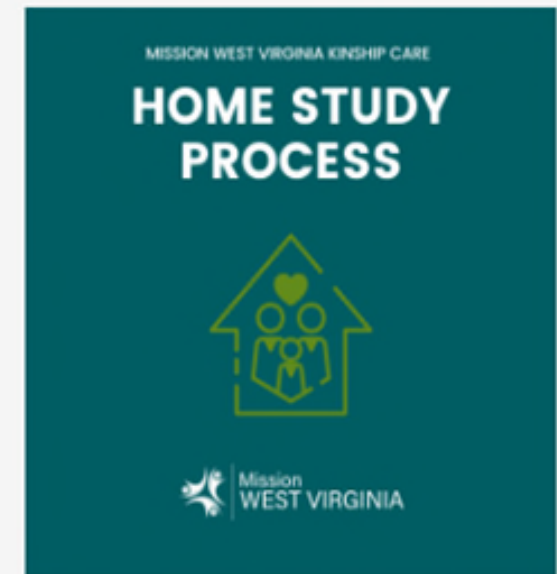
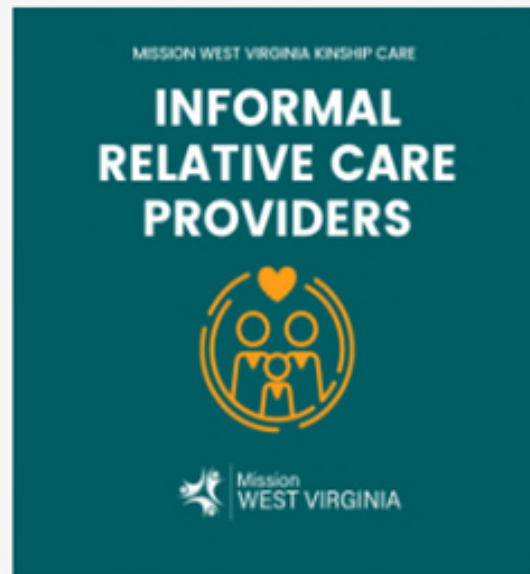
All foster children are entitled to medical, vision, and dental coverage. You will receive two AETNA medical cards. A paper medical card comes in the mail monthly, and you will also have a plastic medical card to maintain. All medications, either prescriptions or over-the-counter, must be stored in places inaccessible to children by the resource parent.

AETNA can assist in purchasing a lock box to store the child's medications.

Foster children are required to be screened by an Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Health Check provider within 30 days of entry into foster care and at scheduled intervals during their stay in foster care. Resource parents are required to use this program for physical examinations of the children placed in their homes.

AETNA Better Health Handbook Link: aetnabetterhealth.com/content/dam/aetna/medicaid/west-virginia/pdf/abhwv_mountain_health_promise_handbook.pdf

Mission West Virginia



missionwv.org/kinship-page

Mission WV Kinship Navigator



When a child is first placed with a relative, a Kinship Navigator may be assigned to the case in order to assist the relative caregiver.

Kinship Navigators may assist the family through the following:

- conducting a needs assessment,
- helping the family address any unmet needs through community resources, explaining various parts of the CPS/Court/Home Study process,
- reaching out to workers when additional assistance is needed,
- helping the family obtain the resources needed for their home.

A Kinship Navigator assists families during the first 90 days of the placement.

If you need to reach our Kinship Navigator program, contact the Coordinator, Tishie Ratliff, at bsskinshipnavigator@wv.gov.

Guardian *Ad Litem* (GAL)



What is a guardian *ad litem*?

- A guardian *ad litem* (“GAL”) is an attorney appointed by the court to investigate a case and report their findings and recommendations to the court. The investigation, report, and recommendations are based upon the best interests of the child. The GAL is the lawyer for the child. Every GAL has had education, training, and experience in regard to the needs of children.
- A GAL may also be appointed to represent anyone who is under 18 or an incompetent person (for example, someone with a mental disability).

What is the role of a GAL?

- The GAL acts as an investigator for the court. The GAL investigates all aspects of the case, writes a report about his or her findings, and also gives recommendations to the court as to what should happen to the child. The GAL works in the best interests of the child. The investigation is very in-depth. The GAL talks to you, your child, and people who know what type of relationship you have with your child. The GAL also looks at various documents and information that helps them with their investigation and recommendations.

Do you have a complaint, concern, or compliment regarding the GAL?

- Anyone with a complaint, concern, or compliment about a guardian *ad litem* working on a child abuse and neglect case can now call a dedicated phone number or send an email to someone at the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia. A staff member in this division will receive and log concerns regarding the work performance of child abuse and neglect guardian *ad litem* attorneys. This information will be collected and reviewed by Division Director Cindy Largent-Hill, who will make referrals, or pass along information as needed.
- No legal advice will be given, and the information reported to the division will be kept in confidence.
- Contact 681-587-9912 or wvgal.can@courtswv.gov.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)



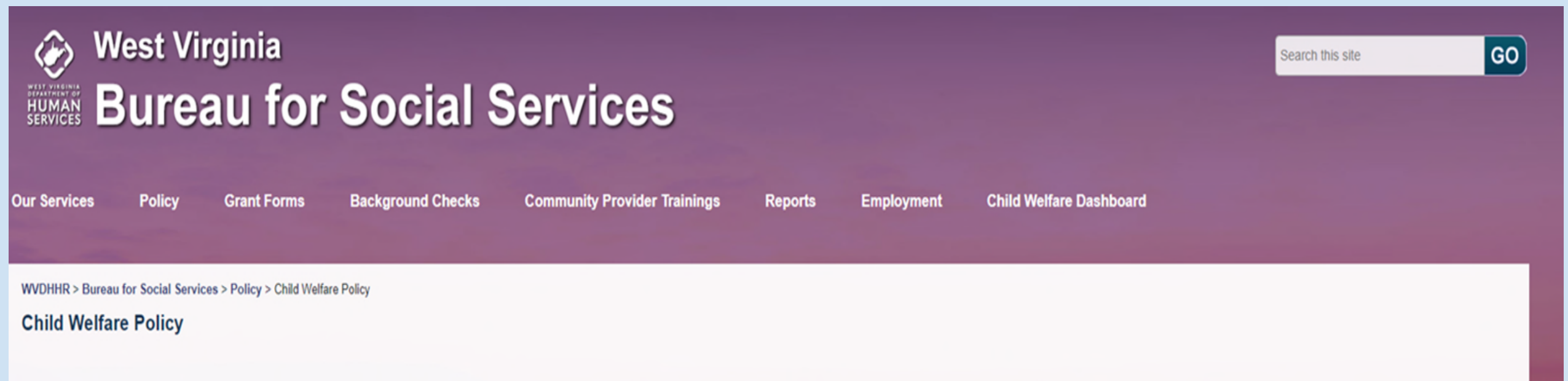
CASA Best-Interest Advocacy



Child Welfare Policy



Child welfare policies can be viewed at: dhhr.wv.gov/bss/policy/Pages/Child-Welfare-Policy.aspx



Abuse and Neglect Hotline



Centralized Intake for Abuse and Neglect

1-800-352-6513

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Abuse and Neglect Disclosure



If a child discloses abuse/neglect to you:

- Notify Worker of Statements
- Keep Log of Statements
- Do Not Question
- Do Not Overreact
- JUST LISTEN

No physical punishment, verbal abuse, ridicule, or intimidation

Discipline must be done:

- With kindness and understanding
- To promote responsibility
- With simple specific expectations and rewards
- Considering the child's developmental needs
- Immediately
- Isolate briefly
- Privately
- Without restricting parental contact

Rights and Responsibilities



Section 12 of Home Finding Policy: Rights, Responsibilities, and Expectations of all Parties

12.1 Rights and Responsibilities of Resource and Kinship/Relative Caregivers

In foster care cases, parenting is a shared responsibility between the birth parent(s), kinship/relative or resource parents, the Department, and the Court. A close working relationship between all members is a necessary part of providing foster care. Resource parents can provide better care when they understand their rights and responsibilities and participate fully in planning for the child's life.

W. Va. Code §49-2-127a requires foster care and kinship/relative care providers caring for children in the legal custody of the Department to have specific duties and contractual rights. Such duties and contractual rights are set forth in an agreement between the Department, the child placing agencies, and the foster care and kinship/relative care providers. Such duties include:

- The duty not to violate the rights of the child, provided in W. Va. Code §49-2-126, Section 1.16: Goals and Rights of Children in Foster Care found in Foster Care policy.
- The duty to provide all children in the foster care or kinship/relative providers' care with appropriate food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical attention, and educational opportunities using the reasonable and prudent parent standard as defined in W. Va. Code §49-2-128 and the Prudent Parent Section of this policy.
- The duty to complete the training required by the Department and/or child placing agency and the foster care or kinship/relative provider.
- The duty to support reunification with the biological family unless it has been determined not to be appropriate by the Court.
- The duty not to divulge any information concerning the child's case or the child's family to anyone except for the child's caseworker, the guardian ad litem, the child's attorney, the child's Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) worker, the prosecuting attorney, the probation officer, the MDT, the Foster Care Ombudsman, or the child's school or health care provider.
- The duty to provide information to the caseworker and the guardian ad litem regarding the child's progress, and to attend MDT meetings, case planning sessions, court hearings, and to advise the Court of any issues or concerns, in the Court's discretion; and
- The duty to teach all children placed in their home age-appropriate life skills.

It is vital for child welfare workers to be fully aware and have a thorough understanding of the role of the Foster Care Ombudsman and their authority, and the violation of any of the above rights and responsibilities warrants an investigation by the Foster Care Ombudsman.

West Virginia Foster and Kinship/Relative Bill of Rights

- Foster parents and kinship parents play an integral, indispensable, and vital role in the state's effort to care for children displaced from their homes, and such parents and persons have the following rights.
- The entire Kinship/Relative Parent Bill of Rights can be viewed at code.wvlegislature.gov/49-2-127/.

West Virginia Foster Child Bill of Rights

- Foster children and children in a kinship placement are active and participating members of the child welfare system.
- The entire Foster Child Bill of Rights can be viewed at code.wvlegislature.gov/49-2-126/.

West Virginia Foster and Kinship/Relative Parent Bill of Rights

Foster parents and kinship parents play an integral, indispensable, and vital role in the state's effort to care for children displaced from their homes, and such parents and persons have the following rights.

- ◆ The right to be treated professionally and ethically as the primary provider of foster or kinship care in accordance with the terms of the agreement between the foster or kinship parent and the child placing agency and the Department.
- ◆ The right to maintain the parent's or parents' own family values and beliefs, so long as the values and beliefs of the child are not infringed upon.
- ◆ The right to receive training, as provided in the agreement with the child placing agency and the Department at appropriate intervals.
- ◆ The right to have an emergency contact 24 hours per day, seven days per week, as set forth in the agreement between the foster or kinship parent and the child placing agency and the Department.
- ◆ The right, prior to the placement of a child, to be notified by the Department and the child placing agency of any known issues relative to the child that may jeopardize the health and safety of the foster or kinship family or the child, or alter the manner in which foster or kinship care should be administered.
- ◆ The right to receive from the Department and the child placing agency, prior to placement of a child, all known information relating to the child's behavior, family background, health, history, or special needs and to receive updates relevant to the care of the child as information becomes available.
- ◆ The right to be provided with a written copy of the individual treatment and service plan concerning the child in the foster or kinship parent's home and to discuss such plan with the case manager, and to receive reasonable notice of any changes to that plan, including timely notice of the need to remove a child from the foster or kinship home and the reasons for the removal.
- ◆ The right to timely and reasonable notice of the Department's case planning and decision-making process regarding the child, as provided in W.Va. Code §49-4-101 and the right to participate in such process, in the discretion of the court.
- ◆ The right to communicate with professionals who work with the child, including, but not limited to, therapy, physicians, and teachers, as permitted by the case plan or the court.
- ◆ The right to be notified, in advance, by the Department or the Court, of any hearing or review where the case plan or permanency of the child is an issue, including initial and periodic reviews held by the Court and permanency plan hearings: Provided, that the right of a foster or kinship parent to attend any hearing is in the discretion of the Court.
- ◆ The right to be provided information regarding the final outcome of an investigation of complaints concerning the operation of a foster or kinship home and to receive an explanation of a corrective action or policy violation relating to foster or kinship parents.
- ◆ The right to be provided with information on how to contact the Foster Care Ombudsman, and to contact the Foster Care Ombudsman's Office, regarding alleged violations of rights, to speak to representatives of these offices confidentially, and to be free from threats, retaliation, or punishment for making complaints.
- ◆ The right to write a letter or submit a report to the court regarding a violation of the rights provided in this section or W.Va. Code §49-2-126, or any concerns over the conduct or performance of the guardian ad litem, a representative of the Department, or a representative of the child placing agency, which the court may act upon as it deems in its discretion to be appropriate: Provided, that the Court may require the clerk to send copies of a letter or report, submitted to the Court pursuant to this subdivision, to the parties in the case prior to the court's review or consideration of such communications.
- ◆ The right to be considered, where appropriate and consistent with the best interests of the child, as a permanent parent or parents for a child who is available for adoption or legal guardianship.
- ◆ The right to move to intervene in the pending case, without fear of retaliation, once parental rights have been terminated.
- ◆ The right to receive, from the Department and the child placing agency, a written copy of the rights set forth in this section and a copy of the contract between the Department and the child placing agency.

If you feel that your rights have been violated, please contact the Foster Care Ombudsman, within the Office of Inspector General:

Office Number: (304) 558-1117

Email: FosterCareOmbudsman@wv.gov

West Virginia Foster Child Bill of Rights

Foster children and children in a kinship placement are active members of the child welfare system and have the following rights.

- ◆ The right to live in a safe and healthy environment, and the least restrictive environment possible.
- ◆ The right to be free from physical, sexual, or psychological abuse or exploitation including being free from unwarranted physical restraint and isolation.
- ◆ The right to receive adequate and healthy food, appropriate and seasonally necessary clothing, and an appropriate travel bag.
- ◆ The right to receive medical, dental, and vision care, mental health services, and substance use treatment services, as needed.
- ◆ The right to be placed in a kinship placement, when such placement meets the objectives set forth in this article.
- ◆ The right, when placed with a foster or kinship family, to be matched as closely as possible with a family meeting the child's needs, including, when possible, the ability to remain with siblings.
- ◆ The right, as appropriate to the child's age and development, to be informed on any medication or chemical substance to be administered to the child.
- ◆ The right to communicate privately, with caseworkers, guardians ad litem (GAL), attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), the prosecuting attorney, or probation officers.
- ◆ The right to have and maintain contact with siblings as may be reasonably accommodated, unless prohibited by court order, the case plan, or other extenuating circumstances.
- ◆ The right to contact the Department or the Foster Care Ombudsman, regarding violations of rights, to speak to representatives of these offices confidentially, and to be free from threats, retaliation, or punishment for making complaints.
- ◆ The right to maintain contact with all previous caregivers and other important adults in his or her life, if desired, unless prohibited by court order or determined by the parent, according to the reasonable and prudent parent standard, not to be in the best interest of the child.
- ◆ The right to participate in religious services and religious activities of his or her choice to the extent possible.
- ◆ The right to attend school, and, consistent with the finances and schedule of the foster or kinship family, to participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment activities, as appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.
- ◆ The right to work and develop job skills in a way that is consistent with the child's age and developmental level.
- ◆ The right to attend Independent Living Program classes and activities if the child meets the age requirements.
- ◆ The right to attend court hearings and speak directly to the judge, in the court's discretion.
- ◆ The right to not be subjected to discrimination or harassment.
- ◆ The right to have access to information regarding available educational options.
- ◆ The right to receive a copy of, and receive an explanation of, the rights set forth in this section from the child's guardian ad litem, caseworker, and attorney.
- ◆ The right to receive care consistent with the reasonable and prudent parenting standard.
- ◆ The right to meet with the child's department case worker no less frequently than every 30 days.

If you feel that your rights have been violated, please contact the Foster Care Ombudsman within the Office of Inspector General:

Office Number: (304) 558-1117

Email: FosterCareOmbudsman@wv.gov

Foster Care Ombudsman



The Ombudsman Shall:

- Advocate for the rights of foster children and foster/kinship parents and work closely with all involved parties.
- Investigate and resolve complaints by foster children and foster/kinship parents, or on the Foster Care Ombudsman's own initiative, regarding managed care services, public agencies, and social service agencies.
- Monitor the development of regulations, policies and procedures related to the foster care system, including input to the Foster Children and the Foster and Kinship Parent Bills of Rights.
- Provide assistance to foster children, foster/kinship parents on behalf of the best interests of foster children.
- Undertake legislative advocacy and proposals for systemic reforms, to secure and ensure the legal, civil, and special rights of foster children.
- Conduct programs of public education when necessary and appropriate, and advise the public of the services, purpose of, and procedures to contact the Foster Care Ombudsman office.

How can someone contact the Foster Care Ombudsman?

The Foster Care Ombudsman unit is headquartered at the West Virginia State Capitol Complex in Charleston, West Virginia and its workforce is positioned throughout the state.

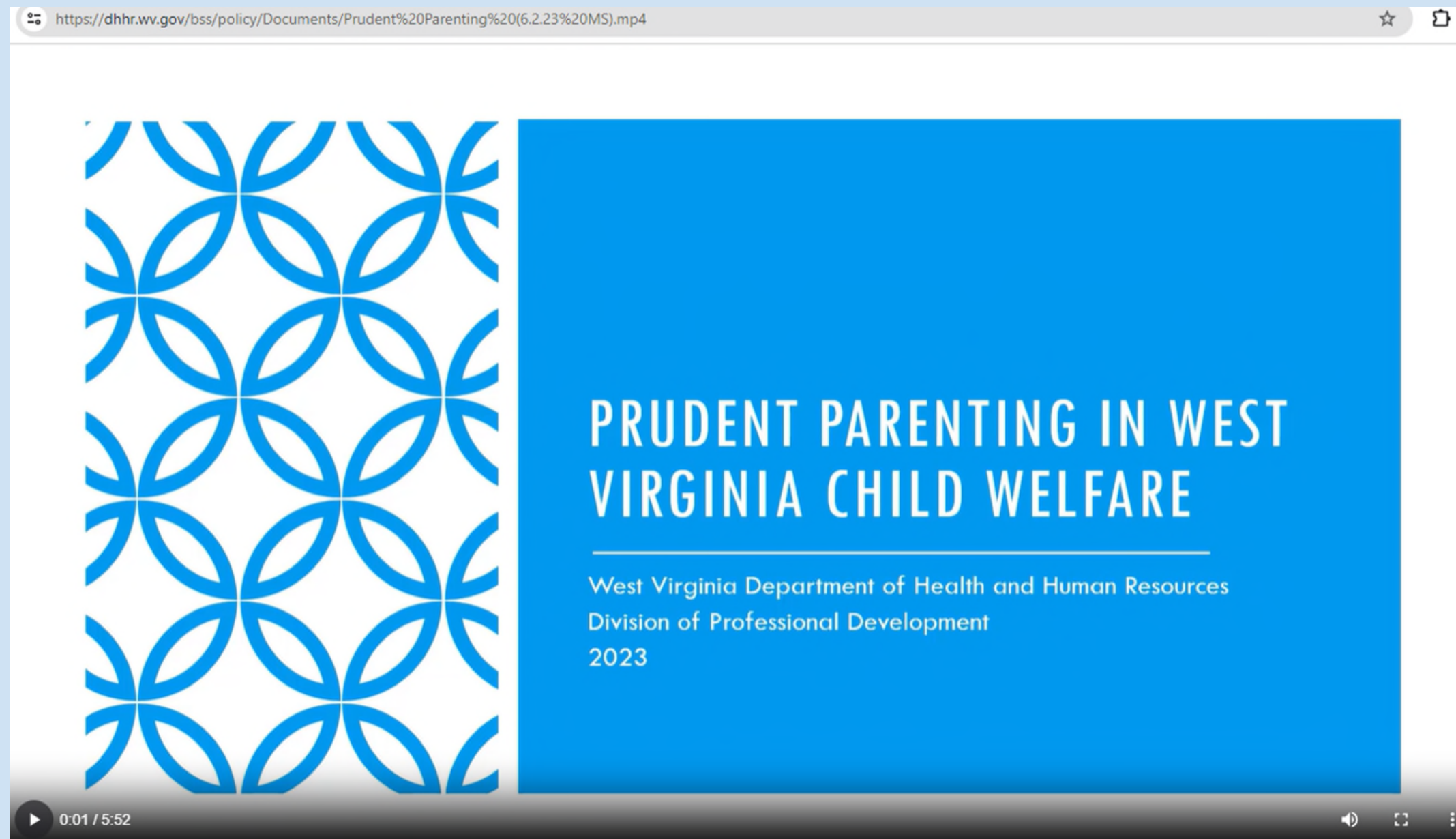
The Foster Care Ombudsman can be reached by telephone at (304) 558-1117 and email at FosterCareOmbudsman@wv.gov.

A Request for Assistance form is available online at <https://www.wvdhhr.org/oig/fco.html>

Prudent Parenting



Prudent Parenting training can be viewed on DoHS's Bureau of Social Services Community Training tab:
[dhr.wv.gov/bss/policy/Documents/Prudent%20Parenting%20\(6.2.23%20MS\).mp4](https://dhr.wv.gov/bss/policy/Documents/Prudent%20Parenting%20(6.2.23%20MS).mp4)



Any child who comes into the custody and care of the Department is entitled to participate in age-appropriate activities for the child's emotional well-being and development of valuable life-coping skills.

- BSS shall make efforts to normalize the lives of children in their custody and to empower a caregiver to approve or disapprove a child's participation in activities based on the caregiver's own assessment using a reasonable and prudent parenting standard, without prior approval of Child and Family Services.
- BSS shall allow a caregiver to make important decisions, similar to the decisions that a parent is entitled to make, regarding the child's participation in activities.
- BSS will verify that private agencies providing out-of-home placement under contract with BSS, promote and protect the ability of a child to participate in age-appropriate activities.
- A caregiver is not liable for harm caused to a child in an out-of-home placement if the child participates in an activity approved by the caregiver, provided that the caregiver has acted in accordance with a reasonable and prudent parent standard.

Prudent Parenting



A caregiver shall use a reasonable and prudent parent standard in determining whether to permit a child to participate in an activity. “Reasonable and prudent parent” standard means the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child’s health, safety, and best interests. When making such decisions, a caregiver shall consider:

- The child’s age, maturity, and developmental level to maintain the overall health and safety of the child.
- Potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity.
- The best interest of the child based on the caregiver’s knowledge of the child.
- The importance of encouraging the child’s emotional and developmental growth.
- The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible.
- The behavioral history of the child and the child’s ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.
- In applying the reasonable and prudent parent standard, kinship/relative and resource caregivers are required to take reasonable steps to determine the appropriateness of the activity in consideration of the child’s age, maturity, and developmental level. It is recognized that there are many different ways to determine whether an activity is appropriate for a foster child. Therefore, the following examples of “reasonable steps” that a kinship/relative or resource caregiver may take in making this determination, are provided as a guide to assist in the decision-making process:
 - Have adequate information about the foster child.
 - Take into account the type of activity and consider the foster child’s mental and physical health, as well as behavioral propensities.
 - Consider where the activity will be held, with whom the foster child will be going, and when they will return.

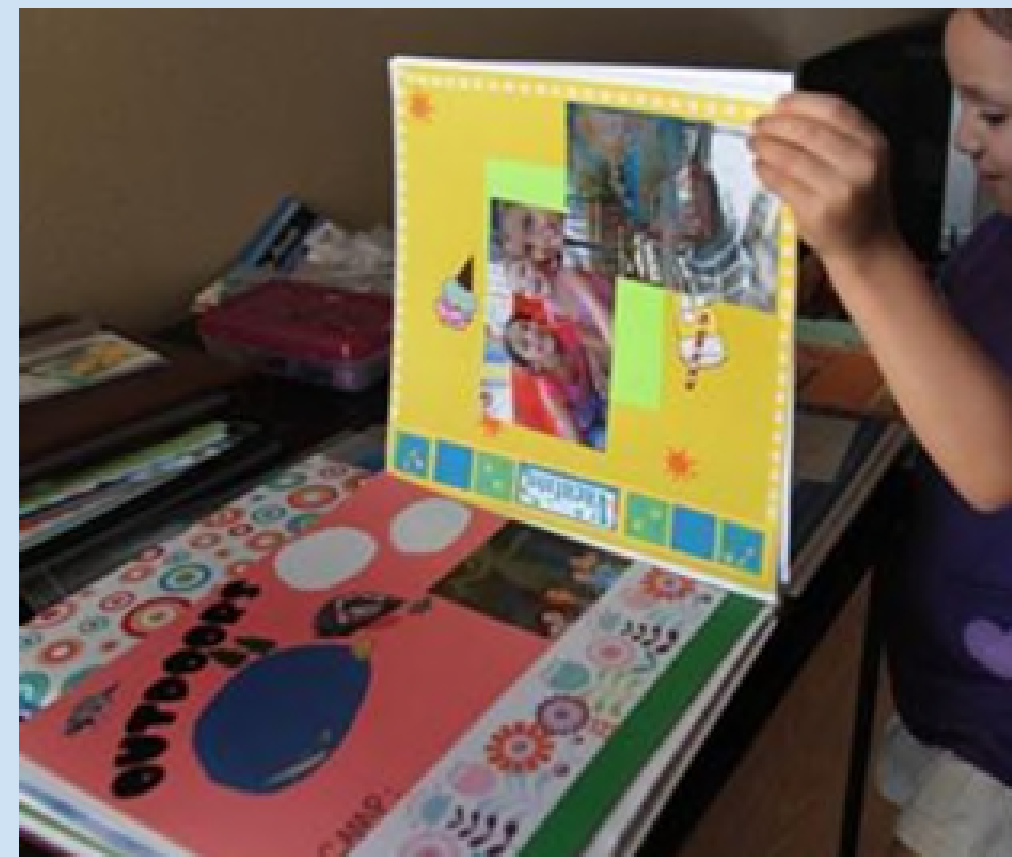
Prudent Parenting



- Kinship/relative, resource, and residential providers/caregivers will also need to consider the reasonable, foreseeable risks of an activity and what safety factors and direct supervision may be involved in the activity to prevent potential harm to the foster child. (i.e., hunting, paintball, archery, or similar activities that may pose a higher risk). Caregivers shall ensure that the child has the safety equipment and any necessary permissions and training necessary to safely engage in each activity the child participates in.
- When children are placed in a group home or residential treatment setting, the provider will incorporate normalcy activities into the program. The activities will be in line with the reasonable and prudent parent standard and will help children enhance skills essential for positive development.

- A Mechanism for Foster/Pre-Adoptive Parents to Receive and Maintain Information About the Child in Their Care
- Personal Information
- Paperwork
- FC – 40 and FC – 40A
- SS FC 6 A (Contract)
- SS FC 10A (Medical Report)
- Clothes/Inventory (You must keep updated)
- Worker's name and telephone number
- Supervisor's name and telephone number
- Call Home Finder when children are placed/removed
- Medical Information
- Educational Information
- The information is **CONFIDENTIAL** and should only be shared with members of the MDT
- Journey Notebook Forms can be viewed at dhhr.wv.gov/bss/policy/Pages/Child%20Welfare%20Forms.aspx.

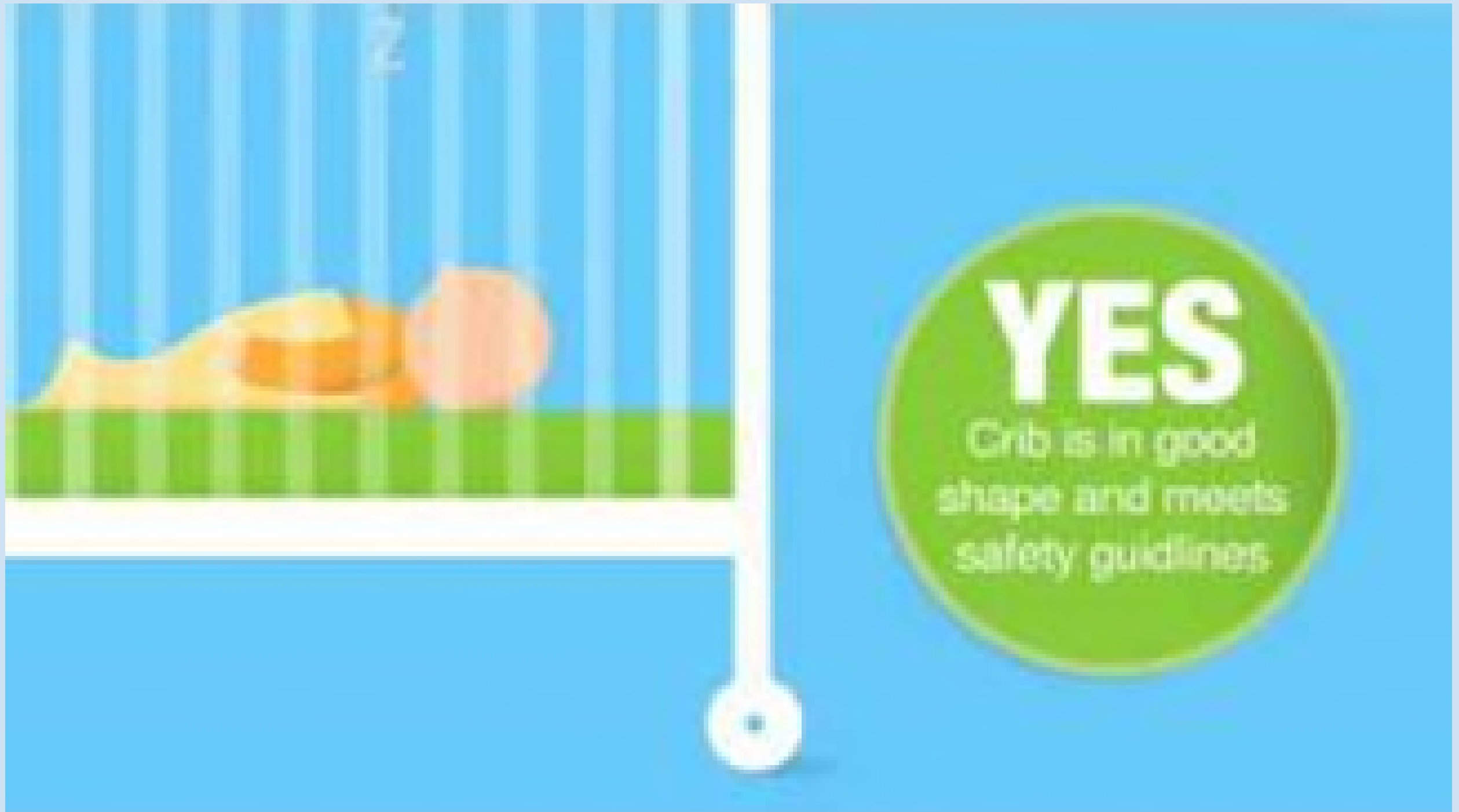
- A pictorial and written representation of the child's life designed to help the child make sense of his unique background and history.
- The life book can include birthparents, siblings, other relatives, foster parents, teacher, etc.



Safe Sleep



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
**HUMAN
SERVICES**



Safe Sleep

- Each infant shall have a crib that meets federal standards for sleeping, including portable cribs.
- At no time will infants share a bed with an adult; they must have their own crib or portable crib.

Say YES to Safe Sleep

MOST (99%) of West Virginia parents agree the safety of their babies is most important when thinking about where their babies sleep.

Did you know?
One baby dies every 10 days in West Virginia as a result of unsafe sleeping.

SafeSoundBabies.com

YES
Baby always sleeps alone, on her back and in her crib

YES
Crib is clear of toys, heavy or loose blankets, bumper pads & pillows

YES
It's safest for baby to sleep in the room where you sleep, but not in your bed.

YES
Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a comfortable temperature

YES
Mattress is firm & fits close to the sides

YES
Baby sleeps in a smoke-free room

Liability Insurance

DoHS and the State Board of Risk and Insurance Management (BRIM) have developed an agreement to provide general liability and property insurance protection for all approved foster homes in West Virginia.

General Liability Insurance

- Protects the Department, including its employees and the foster/adoptive parents for negligent acts of the foster child that causes injury or damage to persons other than the foster/adoptive parents.
- Limits of liability -\$10,000 for each occurrence.

Property Insurance

- This insurance protects the foster/adoptive parent from property damage caused by the foster child to the foster/adoptive parents' own property.
- Losses will be adjusted on an actual cash value basis
- Each loss will be subject to a two thousand five hundred dollar (\$2,500.00) deductible, with the foster/adoptive parent responsible for the first three hundred dollars (\$300.00) of the loss.

BRIM: <https://brim.wv.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

What happens if I'm having problems with a worker?

If you're having problems with a worker, follow the chain of command:

- Try to work it out with them (the worker)
- Contact their supervisor
- Contact your Home Finder
- Home Finder will talk with worker
- Home Finder will talk with supervisor
- Home Finding Supervisor will talk with CPS Supervisor

Social Media (Confidentiality)



- Resource parents have the responsibility to safeguard the child's privacy by not engaging in activities or behaviors that will expose the child to negative publicity.
- Resource parents do not have the right to sign consents for the child to be photographed for publication in print or the electronic media. Only the child's worker can give this permission.
- It is the policy of DoHS/BSS to encourage normalcy in the lives of resource children. As such, it is acceptable to post photos of a resource child(ren) in a family or group setting (school, sports, sleepovers, parties, etc.) on social media. **However, in any social media posting, (photographic or print) resource, parents are prohibited from releasing any information regarding the fact that the children are in a resource circumstance, the foster adoptive child(ren)'s previous custodians, geographic or demographic information that could jeopardize the foster child(ren)'s safety, or any other information that would breach the confidentiality provisions of W. Va. Code §49-5-101.** These prohibitions continue even after any placement has ended. Furthermore, for the safety of the children, it is strongly advised that all such postings be made on private settings, to be seen by the resource parent's friend groups only, and not posted publicly.

Foster Parent Training



The goals of Foster Parent Training are:

- To meet the multiple needs of children placed in foster and adoptive families.
- To strengthen families (whether they be kinship, foster, adopted, blended, or members of a tribe or clan).
- Strengthen the quality of family foster care and adoptive services through standardization of training, assessment and ongoing professional development.
- To share resources among public and voluntary child welfare agencies, universities, foster parent associations, and national child welfare organizations.



- National Training and Development Curriculum e-learning courses provide foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers with information and resources through the right training at just the right time. Whether you need information to respond to a child in crisis or adjust to new family dynamics, our courses are available to guide you.
- In each interactive course, through videos and podcasts, you will hear from child welfare professionals, foster and adoptive parents, and young adults with lived expertise. You will complete interactive activities and quizzes that will help you apply what you hear and learn to your individual experience. Each course will also give you suggestions for additional resources you can use to enhance your ongoing exploration of this topic.
- These trainings will be provided by West Virginia Social Work Education Consortium (WV SWEC); colleges and universities in West Virginia.

In-Service Training



- All certified kinship/relative and resource caregivers must complete at least twelve 12 hours of in-service training annually. The content of the training will be based on needs expressed by the certified kinship/relative or resource caregivers or the Department.
- In addition to the annual 12 hours of in-service training requirement, all certified kinship/relative and resource caregivers must receive CPR/First aid training each year.

Below are some online links for in service training opportunities:

- West Virginia Foster and Adoptive Care Training wvfact.com
- Shepherd University shepherd.edu/pride/trauma-resources
- DoHS Community Provider Trainings:
dhhr.wv.gov/bss/communitytrainings/Pages/default.aspx

Please talk with your Home Finder about registering for an in-service training offered by SWEC.

In-Service Training Topics



Topics to Consider for In-Service Training:

- Trauma Informed Care
- Autism and Foster Care
- Discipline and Consistency
- Chemical Dependency
- Promoting Cultural and Personal Identity
- Building Effective Communication Skills
- Issues Related to Sexuality
- Promoting a Positive Self-Esteem
- Working with Sexually Abused Children
- Complex Behaviors
- Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture, and Meet Developmental Needs
- Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families
- Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence

humanservices.wv.gov



Bureau for Behavioral Health ▾



Bureau for Child Support Enforcement ▾



Bureau for Family Assistance ▾



Bureau for Medical Services ▾



Bureau for Public Health ▾



Bureau for Social Services ▾



Children's Health & Insurance Program (CHIP) ▾



Health Care Authority ▾



Office of Drug Control Policy ▾



Office of Health Facilities ▾



Office of Inspector General ▾

Chafee funds are used to assist youth/ young adults in a wide variety of areas designed to support a successful transition to adulthood. Activities and programs include, but are not limited to, help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and assured connections to caring adults. Specific services and supports are determined by the child welfare agency, vary by State, locality and agency, and are often based on the individual needs of the young person. Many State or local agencies contract with private organizations to deliver services to young people.

Eligibility for the program, as outlined in federal law, includes:

- Youth in foster care, ages 14 and older;
- Young people in or formerly in foster care, ages 18 to 21 or 23 in some jurisdiction;
- Youth who left foster care through adoption or guardianship at age 16 or older; and
- Youth “likely to age out of foster care” to receive assistance to participate in age appropriate and normative activities.



AETNA - IFOSTER

CONNECTIONS FOR LIFE

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Aetna has partnered with iFoster to provide free technology to their Mountain Health Promise customers through the Aetna Connections for Life Program.

Technology

- Youth ages 13-17 are eligible for a tablet
- Youth aged 18+ are eligible for a laptop

Eligibility

Youth must be under BCF supervision AND enrolled in Aetna Mountain Health Promise.

If youth received a tablet prior to turning 18, they can also apply for a laptop when they become 18 and are still under BCF supervision and enrolled Aetna Mountain Health Promise.

Apply for a Device

A youth, caregiver, or caseworker can reach out to the youth's Aetna Care Manager or can contact Aetna Member services at:
1-888-348-2922.

TECHNOLOGY PROVIDED

Tablet (for eligible youth age 13-17)

7 inch Android tablet, WiFi-ready, with front and rear cameras and 8GB of expandable memory

Laptop (for eligible youth age 18+)

Light-weight, semi-rugged laptop with Microsoft Windows & Office, Wi-Fi-ready, HDMI-ready, 11 hour battery life

Delivery, Resource Help, and Tech Support

iFoster provides device delivery and ongoing tech support. iFoster can connect youth and caregivers to daily living, health/wellness, education and employment resources with live navigators and the online/app iFoster resource portal.



HELP4WV Children's Crisis & Referral Line



844
CHILDREN'S CRISIS
& REFERRAL LINE
HELP 4 WV

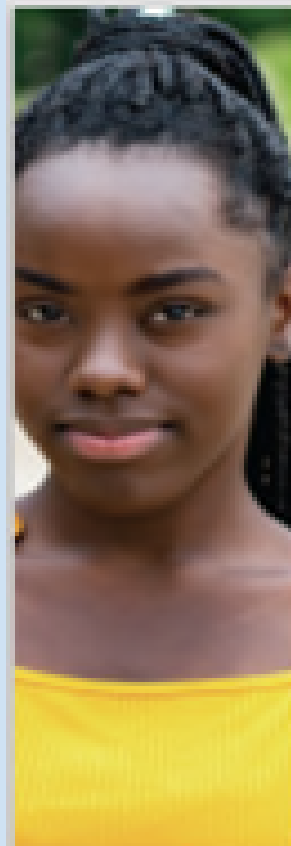


Are you concerned
about your child's
BEHAVIOR or
MENTAL HEALTH?

Help is available.

304-356-5840

help4wv.com



Signs of common behavioral health issues:

- Panic or tantrums at times of separation from parents
- Feeling or appearing depressed, sad, tearful, or irritable
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Sleeping more or less than usual
- Feeling tired or having less energy
- Caring less about school or not doing as well in school
- Having thoughts of suicide or wanting to die
- Constant thoughts and intense fears about the safety of parents and caretakers
- Refusing to go to school
- Frequent temper tantrums
- Excessive arguing
- Trouble paying attention
- Hyperactivity
- Obsessions and compulsions
- Drug and alcohol use
- Frequent anger and resentment



help4wv.com



Adult Family Care



Naomi Okes
Adult Protective Services

How do I become an Adult Family Care Provider?

All providers must:

- Meet certain fire, safety, sanitation, and health standards
- May not accept more than three residents
- Must provide adequate living space and nutritious meals for each adult placed in their home
- Must be willing to accept an adult without regard to race, creed or national origin

The application process:

1. Completion of the application packet
2. Completion of the home study;
 - Initial visit to the home
 - Interview with the applicant
 - Individual interviews with each family member
 - Group interview with all household members together
3. Be fingerprinted for background checks

For more information about Adult Family Care

Email: bssafc@wv.gov or contact:

Teresa Finster (681) 433-7248, Lewis County Office

Kelly O Morris (304) 765-7344, Braxton County Office

Clint Stenger (304) 269-6820 Ext. 37246, Lewis County Office

Karen Thompson/AFC Supervisor (304) 425-8738 Ext. 63918

Home Finding Contacts



Christie Spahr

Program Manager I Home Finding
Office: 304-329-4340 ext 98091
Christie.B.Spahr@wv.gov

Nichole Hudson

Home Finding Supervisor
Office: 304-232-4411 ext 00192
Nichole.R.Hudson@wv.gov
Counties: Braxton, Clay, Gilmer, Webster, Calhoun, Kanawha, Jackson, Roane

Brittany Habig

Home Finding Supervisor
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Brittany.J.Habig@wv.gov
Counties: Berkeley, Jefferson, Marion, Mon, Morgan, Pleasants, Ritchie, Wirt, Wood

Stacy Flynn

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Counties: Boone, Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Putnam, Wayne

Christopher Stahl

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Counties: Brooke, Hancock, Marshall, Ohio, Tyler, Wetzel

Tesa Ash

Home Finding Supervisor
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Tesa.H.Ash@wv.gov
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Malinda Goddard

Home Finding Supervisor
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Malinda.C.Goddard@wv.gov
County: Mercer

Erica Whitt

Home Finding Supervisor
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Erica.K.Whitt@wv.gov
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