

# **You and Children Services Complaint Procedure**



## **Protecting Our Children Strengthening Our Families**

This grievance/complaint review procedure is to be used by parents, custodians, legal guardians, foster parents, kinship care providers, applicants or providers of approved adult-supervised living arrangements, adoptive applicants, adoptive parents, citizens, and children concerning the provisions of services; and appeals by alleged perpetrators who disagree with Children Services disposition of a report of child abuse or neglect.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am hearing impaired and request assistance with my complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am visually impaired and request assistance with my complaint.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not speak English as my primary language. My primary language is \_\_\_\_\_ and I request an interpreter.

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### Review of Complaint Procedure

We cannot respond to concerns or complaints unless we are made aware of them, and in a timely manner. **The person who is directly affected by the concern/problem must make the complaint within 30 calendar days of the incident/decision, or case disposition which caused the complaint.** This procedure should be informal and relatively easy to use. It is the desire of Children Services to resolve complaints in a timely, respectful and professional manner. **THIS COMPLAINT AND REVIEW PROCEDURE CAN ONLY BE USED TO REVIEW AGENCY DECISIONS. IT CANNOT BE USED TO APPEAL DECISIONS RENDERED BY A COURT OR SERVICES IN A COURT ORDERED CASE PLAN.**

A person who is hearing or visually impaired or whose primary language is other than English, is to notify the agency Executive Secretary by phone (330)345-5340, fax (330)345-7082 and may have someone assist them in completing this form and check the appropriate box to request assistance. According to the policy, the agency will provide an interpreter or sign language interpreter to assist the complainant and the agency. The use of an interpreter (hours of service, appointments, etc.) will be determined by the agency and the cost of this service will be borne by the agency.

Video or audio recordings of any complaint proceedings by either party are prohibited.

**Step 1: (INFORMAL STEP) The first step is to informally discuss your grievance/complaint with the assigned social worker and their supervisor on case related matters.** This can be done any time before the thirty (30) calendar days lapse from the incident/decision which the person is seeking to change. The agency representatives are to respond and reach a decision within ten work days. If a resolution agreeable to both parties is reached, the agency representative will put the resolution in writing and both parties are to sign it. A copy will be given to the complainant and the original is to be put in the appropriate case/record at the agency.

If this informal step does not result in an acceptable resolution, the person making the complaint must put their complaint in writing, using this complaint form. The agency must receive the written complaint within 30 calendar days from the incident/decision which the person is seeking to change. Failure to meet this deadline will forfeit the right to use this complaint procedure.

**Step 2: (FORMAL STEP-CASE RELATED)** If the social worker and supervisor don't respond with a decision within ten working days or don't provide a response that satisfies the complainant, the complainant is then to reduce the complaint to written form using the agency provided **Complaint Form**. The completed

Complaint Form may be mailed, faxed or dropped off at the main office, 2534 Burbank Rd. Wooster, Ohio 44691 to the attention of the "Executive Secretary." The agency must receive the completed Complaint Form within 30 calendar days of the incident/decision which gave rise to the complaint.

**(FORMAL STEP-NON CASE RELATED)** Complaints which are administrative in nature and/or related solely to agency policy are to be reduced to writing on the complaint form and be mailed, faxed or dropped off at the main office, 2534 Burbank Rd. Wooster, Ohio 44691 to the attention of the "Executive Secretary."

The agency must receive the completed Complaint Form within 30 days of the incident/decision which gave rise to the complaint. Failure to meet this deadline will forfeit the right to use this complaint procedure.

The agency supervisor/representative is to respond and reach a decision within ten work days. If the resolution offered is agreeable to both parties, the agency representative will put the resolution in writing and both parties are to sign it. A copy will be given to the complainant and the original is to be put in the appropriate case/record at the agency. If the resolution offered is not acceptable to the complainant, the complainant has ten work days from receiving the written decision of the agency to give written notice to the Executive Director of their appeal to STEP 3 with their complaint and provide the Executive Director with any and all documentation used in earlier steps of this complaint procedure, including an updated copy of the completed complaint form.

Step 3 The agency Executive Director, Assistant Director or their designee will review and respond to the complaint. As part of this review, they may do any, all or none of the following:

- (1) Call the complainant and discuss the complaint over the phone.
- (2) Invite the complainant in for an interview. The agency will determine who will be permitted to participate in this discussion. The complainant may request that relevant parties be considered.
- (3) Interview others whose participation is deemed relevant to the issue.
- (4) Request and review documents relevant to the issue.

The Executive Director will inform the Children Services Board of all complaints that reach the third step. The Executive Director or their designee will respond in writing to the complainant within 30 calendar days of receiving the complaint. Time frames may be waived by agreement of both parties. Decisions of the Executive Director will be final. Some agency decisions may be subject to appeal to the Court of Common Pleas. The complainant may consult with an attorney at any time at their expense.

When an appeal of a Children Services disposition/resolution of a report of child abuse or neglect is heard and Children Services changes the original disposition/resolution, the agency shall provide the Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services with information to update the central registry.





