



HCJFS always needs foster and adoptive parents. Anyone interested in becoming a foster or adoptive parent may call 632-6366 or visit [www.hcfoster.org](http://www.hcfoster.org) or [www.hcadopt.org](http://www.hcadopt.org).

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Better service to foster parents is goal of forum**

Hamilton County foster parents will gather Thursday evening for a forum sponsored by the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services. This is the first time the agency has held such a forum for foster parents and is part of an effort to improve services to them.

"Foster parents care for children who struggle with the effects of abuse and neglect. It's noble and challenging work and critical to the well being of this community," said HCJFS director Suzanne Burke. "Our agency needs to improve communications with foster parents, be clearer in our expectations and more consistent in applying policies. The forum is a step in that direction."

The forum will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday Oct. 7 at North College Hill High School.

Foster parents will hear about new laws, procedures and initiatives; meet the HCJFS Executive Team; and have an opportunity for questions and answers. Forum topics include:

- New procedures for handling foster parent complaints and grievances
- The relaunch of an improved website for current and prospective foster parents, [www.hcfoster.org](http://www.hcfoster.org)
- Formation of a new Foster Care Advisory Council
- A new Foster Parent Handbook
- A new Ohio law which establishes specialized foster homes
- The role of foster parents in HCJFS performance
- Announcement by foster parent Doug Miller of the Don Miller Foster Family Scholarship Fund, which is designed to help foster parents or their dependents with tuition at the University of Cincinnati.

In an average month, about 1,500 Hamilton County children are living in some type of out-of-home care due to abuse and neglect. They may be in foster homes, with relatives, or in group settings. HCJFS recruits, screens, trains and licenses its own foster parents, who number about 400. It also holds contracts with private agencies that provide specialized foster homes for children who need more intensive services. The forum is for HCJFS-licensed foster parents.

The foster care forum is the second in a regular series of forums that HCJFS is sponsoring for its stakeholders. Last year, a forum to share information about changes in state child care laws drew about 400 of the agency's licensed home child care providers.