

Adoptive Parents and Applicants: How to solve a problem with HCJFS Children's Services

As an adoptive parent or an applicant, you may not always agree with the decisions or actions taken by the agency. If you disagree with a decision or action, we encourage you to try and settle the issue with the worker first. However, when that does not resolve the problem, you may ask for a review through the agency's Problem Resolution and Grievance Procedure, which is described below.

- If your concern is related to the foster or pre-adoptive child, contact the child's worker.
- If your concern is related to your foster or pre-adoptive home or family, contact your support worker, adoption worker, or home study assessment worker.

Share your concerns and ask the worker to explain why the decision or action was taken. Listen to the worker's answers. If you and the worker cannot solve the problem, follow the steps listed below.

NOTE: Certain very serious complaints as described within this Fact Sheet can be addressed through a formal hearing with the Foster and Adoptive Parent Grievance Panel. You are encouraged *but not required* to resolve serious complaints at the supervisor level before requesting a hearing with the Grievance Panel.

Talk with the Supervisor

- Call 946-1000 and ask for the name and telephone number of the worker's supervisor.
- Contact the worker's supervisor. You can talk with the supervisor over the phone or ask for a meeting.
- Describe your concerns and tell the supervisor why you're not satisfied.
- Listen and ask questions.
- The supervisor will listen and work with you to solve the problem.
- You will receive a letter from the supervisor. The letter will explain your concerns and what actions the supervisor will or will not take.

- If you are not satisfied with the supervisor's response and your complaint is considered a serious complaint, see procedures below.

Stay of Action

The agency will stay any planned action related to your complaint pending the outcome of the grievance hearing, unless the responsible section manager documents that such a stay would be clearly detrimental to the child or clearly not in the child's best interest.

Grievance Panel for Serious Complaints

The Adoptive Parent Grievance Panel acts as the Director's representative if your complaint is one of the following:

- You have been denied approval as a foster or adoptive parent
- The agency will not use your foster or adoptive home
- The agency is recommending that your foster parent license be revoked or your recertification be denied

** Applicants and adoptive parents may file a formal complaint alleging MEPA discrimination with the Bureau of Civil Rights of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. See the MEPA Formal Complaint Procedure for information on filing a formal MEPA complaint or call HCJFS MEPA Monitor Shirley Norman at 946-1488 for more information.

The Adoptive Parent Grievance Panel will **ONLY** hear complaints on the issues listed above. If you want to schedule a hearing with the Adoptive Parent Grievance Panel, call the Children's Services Consumer Services Office at 946-2138.

Formal Problem Resolution and Grievance Procedure

For a copy of the formal Foster and Adoptive Parent Problem Resolution and Grievance Procedure, call the Children's Services Consumer Services Office at 946-2138.