

## Speaking Script for the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I serve on the Citizen Foster Care Review Board in \_\_\_\_\_ County for Judge \_\_\_\_\_.

As Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers, we review the cases of thousands of children who have been removed from their homes due to dependency, neglect and abuse, as well as status offenses.

Volunteers review the case files of children who are in the care of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. The volunteers help ensure that permanency for at-risk children remains the central objective of the courts and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services by making recommendations to both.

In many areas around Kentucky, the CFCRB conducts Interested Party Reviews. During these reviews, parties with an interest in the outcome of children in the Cabinet's custody are interviewed during an interactive meeting. Volunteers use the information gathered during the meeting to complete a report, which is submitted to the courts.

Recommendations from our volunteers assist judges to make critical decisions about the placement of children in safe and permanent homes.

The CFCRB operates within the Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The AOC is the support arm of the Kentucky Court of Justice.

**Our mission...** is to ensure safe, permanent, timely placement of Kentucky children in out-of-home care.

### **Our Vision...**

**With respect to children in care:** Ensure adequate and necessary services are provided to families and children with the utmost importance given to safety, well-being and permanency.

**With respect to the judges we serve:** Provide timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed information about children in care so as to promote knowledgeable permanency decisions.

**With respect to CFCRB volunteers:** Promote awareness and understanding regarding children's issues through educational opportunities at local, regional and state level.

**With respect to the cabinet for Health and family Services:** Provide meaningful, respectful feedback regarding paths to permanency.

Review boards are located in all 120 counties and are supported by a volunteer base of more than 700 dedicated people from throughout Kentucky. Each year, volunteers conduct more than

20,000 reviews of nearly 10,000 children who have been removed from their home and placed in foster care, child-care facilities or with relatives.

The Kentucky General Assembly created the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards in 1982 as a way to decrease the time children spend in foster care.

The volunteer reviews help ensure that children receive the necessary services while in foster care and are ultimately placed in safe and permanent homes.

Those interested in volunteering must complete an initial six-hour training session, consent to a criminal record check from the AOC and a Central Registry Check with the Cabinet.

New Volunteers attend regional sessions that focus on:

- Department for Community Based Services procedures;
- Forms used in dependency, neglect and abuse cases;
- Court process;
- Mental health issues of children in out-of-home care;
- Mock Review of the child's case with DCBS.

Once a volunteer has attended training and record checks are completed, a recommendation is made to the chief judge of the local District Court or Family Court for appointment. Judges appoint volunteers for a three-year term.

All volunteers receive a comprehensive handbook on the program and an array of opportunities for continuing education.

The review boards typically meet once a month. Each board consists of at least three members, with some boards having as many as 12 members.

CFCRB volunteers give their time and efforts to advocate for the children in their communities. Volunteers come from various educational and professional backgrounds but they share a deep compassion for children.

Please see the CFCRB Fact Sheet Handout for additional statistics from our past fiscal year.

**Does anyone have any questions?**

**If anyone is interested in becoming a volunteer, I have brochures and applications with me today.**

**Please feel free to take a brochure and thank you for your time.**