Launching an FPNO Site
Overview

- **FPNO**
  FPNO is an initiative of Every Child Oregon (www.EveryChildOregon.org), a grassroots community mobilization effort that seeks to connect Oregonians with opportunities to serve and support children and families involved in the foster care system. FPNO is a monthly 4-hour program hosted by local faith communities and community partners. FPNO provides a much-needed break for foster parents while trained volunteers spend time caring for and building relationship with their children in a safe and nurturing environment. FPNO sites host the event during the same timeframe on the same day of the month for the entire season (i.e. 2nd Saturday of the month from 3:00-7:00 pm).

- **Who can attend FPNO**
  FPNO is for ODHS foster families. Foster parents drop off their children (foster, bio and adopted) for an evening of fun while they have time to care for themselves. Children who attend range in ages from 6 weeks to 17 years old.

- **How families are selected**
  All families that attend FPNO come from ODHS through a referral process. Each FPNO site has an ODHS liaison that works with them to recruit families from the foster care system to attend each month. The number of children and families that can be served at an FPNO site is determined by its number of trained volunteers.

- **Types of sites**
  - Faith Community Based – the site exists as a ministry of the faith community and is staffed by volunteers who attend the host site faith community
  - Faith Community Hosted – a site is hosted by a faith community and is open to the volunteers from the community, regardless of faith background
  - Community Based – a site is hosted by a community partner and is staffed by volunteers from the community

- **Volunteer recruitment and requirements**
  FPNO sites work locally with Every Child to recruit volunteers to maintain ratios of 4 children to 1 adult and 2 infants to 1 adult. In recruiting volunteers, keep in mind that children must always be with at least two unrelated adult volunteers at all times. It is also important to factor in the additional need for support staff such as kitchen, security, floaters, etc.

  Volunteers are recruited and vetted by the FPNO site. The Site Coordinator or assigned FPNO leadership (i.e. Volunteer Coordinator) will send all potential volunteers the Volunteer Application

and background check form to be completed and submitted prior to receiving the FPNO training. The Site Coordinator should review the Volunteer Application thoroughly, send reference checks and receive a cleared background check for the applicant prior to giving information on training. Background checks are to be run for each volunteer every two years at minimum. Each volunteer must be trained and vetted prior to volunteering at an FPNO event.

FPNO is much more than babysitting; it's a place for children to develop healthy, meaningful relationships with caring adults. Providing a safe space for children requires consistency, so volunteers should commit to the full FPNO season's monthly events (i.e. September through May). We know life happens (i.e. sickness, graduations, etc.), but having that overall commitment from your team will allow for more consistent engagement with the children and families served.

- **FPNO Site Coordinator**
  FPNO sites are led by one or two Site Coordinators. The Site Coordinator is a high-level volunteer who is the main point of contact throughout the planning and implementation process with Every Child, ODHS, volunteers and attending families. The Site Coordinator is also the point person for foster families on the day-of FPNO events. Launching and maintaining an FPNO site requires regular communication with ODHS and the Every Child Affiliate, as well as organization and delegation of volunteer staff. The Site Coordinator will take an active role in the safety and compliance of the FPNO site, scheduling and executing monthly FPNO events, maintaining confidentiality, secure funding, and reporting to both the ODHS liaison and Every Child on a monthly basis.

- **Site commitment**
  In establishing an FPNO site, it is essential to have the support and commitment from the host site's leadership. This site commitment includes:
    o Facility use for the designated day of the month and timeframe
    o Building safety (doors locked from outside access, no hazardous items out during event, etc.)
    o Understanding of guidelines for the event (see *Safety and Security Guidelines* handout)
    o Financial support for monthly events and $250 annual contribution to Every Child Oregon for marketing materials, volunteer shirts and ongoing consultation with the Every Child Service Center
    o A certificate of insurance from the host site adding Every Child's backbone organization, The Contingent DBA Foster Parents' Night Out, as additional insured

- **Impact of FPNO**
  One family who joined our FPNO in October has been outspoken about how much they appreciate the monthly time off. Having two biological kids and three foster kids, it is nearly impossible to find someone who can watch all the kids for a night. FPNO has given them the respite they craved. Their five girls smile literally all night long, and each of them has made at least one specific connection with a volunteer who they run to when they walk in the door and play with for the rest of the night. In December, this family had plans on Saturday, but when their girls found out that they would be missing FPNO, they had their family reschedule so they could make it! Direct quote from the girls— "We can't miss the funnest event ever, dad!"
                                                        -FPNO Site Coordinator, Yamhill County

In addition to providing care and support for foster parents and children at monthly events, the relationships built through FPNO can facilitate opportunities for volunteers to become respite care providers for these families. FPNO not only supports the retention of existing foster families but as it gives volunteers the chance to get to know children in care, it is also powerful in foster parent recruitment!