



## Normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

**What is the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard?**



Welcome back. What do we mean when we talk about prudent parenting? What is the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard?

# Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard:

## The standard is characterized by:

### Careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain a child's:

- ✓ Health
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Best interests

While at the same time encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in care participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.



The Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard is characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain a child's health, safety, and best interests while at the same time encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.

**Why are we talking about this now?**



Why are we talking about this now?

## Why are we talking about this now?



Public Law 113-183, the *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act*, was passed in 2014.

This law requires states to implement a Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to support normalcy for children in care.



Well, Public Law 113-183, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, was passed in 2014. This law requires states to implement a Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to support normalcy for children in care.

## **What does it mean to a foster caregiver?**



What does all of this mean to a foster caregiver?

# What does it mean to a foster caregiver?

## As a foster caregiver:

You will have the responsibility of making decisions related to normal activities.

To feel more confident in taking on this responsibility foster care givers may:

- Attend training
- Communicate with licensing agency or DHHR
- Apply existing policies and procedures

As a foster caregiver, you will have the responsibility of making decisions that will provide opportunities for children and youth in care to participate normal childhood activities.

To feel more confident in taking on this responsibility foster caregivers should attend training on topics such as child development and understanding the impact trauma can have on development, emotions and behavior of children and youth in care. Foster caregivers can also communicate with the licensing agency or the DHHR worker for support when the decision may be unclear or there are concerns, and consider the policies and practice of both agencies when applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard.

## What does it mean to a foster caregiver?

Respect your role as nurturer to the child and advocate for, and encourage participation in normal activities.



Respect your role as nurturer to the child and advocate for, and encourage participation in normal activities. Encouraging participation in normal childhood activities should be an ongoing conversation between the youth, biological parents, foster caregivers, case worker, guardian ad litem, MDT members and the court.

## **What factors do foster caregivers need to consider when applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard?**



Now that we've discussed what all of this means to you as a foster caregiver, let's talk about some factors that foster caregivers need to consider when applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard



# Factors to consider

## Get to know the child:

- Likes and dislikes
- Social preferences
- Personality
- Other factors



First and foremost, get to know the child or youth you are caring for. What are their likes and dislikes? What are their social preferences; for example are they shy or prefer to be around lots of people? How do they express their individual personality? Are there any other factors to consider, including past abuse or neglect, when encouraging normal childhood activities? Remember, not all children and youth have had the same experiences or development or like to do the same things. Try to determine, with the help of the DHHR caseworker and your home finder if needed, what activities the child in your home might enjoy.

# Factors to consider

Reasonable steps to determine the appropriateness of activities in consideration

## Consider the child's:

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Maturity
- ✓ Developmental level
- ✓ Emotional growth
- ✓ Developmental growth
- ✓ Best interest
- ✓ Behavioral history

## Other considerations:

- ✓ Potential risk factors
- ✓ Most family-like living experience



In applying the reasonable and prudent parenting standard, foster caregivers are required to take reasonable steps to determine the appropriateness of activities in consideration of the child's age, maturity, and developmental level. You must also consider potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity; does the activity encourage the child's emotional and developmental growth; will the activity provide the child with the most family-like living experience possible; and the behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the proposed activity.

## Factors to consider



Foster parents and residential providers will also need to take into account the reasonable, foreseeable risks of an activity and what safety factors and direct supervision may be involved in the activity in order to prevent potential harm to the child in foster care



Foster parents and residential providers will also need to take into account the reasonable, foreseeable risks of an activity and what safety factors and direct supervision may be involved in the activity in order to prevent potential harm to the child in foster care. Caregivers shall ensure that the child has the safety equipment and necessary permissions and training to safely engage in each activity the child participates in.

For example, hunting, paint ball, archery or similar activities may pose a higher risk and would require special equipment and training in order to be done safely. You may also need to get permission from the DHHR worker.

# Factors to consider



You probably already think about these things when planning activities for your own children



In reality, you probably already think about these things when planning activities for your own children. For example: What do you do when your child gets an invitation to stay the night with a friend? You probably consider, though sometimes quickly and subconsciously, your individual child's age and development. You might also consider how they behave around other children; you would probably want to know what other children will be there if any. You would want to know which family your child will be staying with and if you know the family or not. If you don't know the family you would want to gather some basic information in order to feel comfortable sending your child there. You would probably speak to the other parent and talk about what the kids will be doing for the evening and what kind of supervision will occur. All of these are just some examples of things reasonable and prudent parents do when considering allowing their child to participate in normal activities.

## Factors to consider

A caregiver is not liable for harm caused to a child in an out-of-home placement if the child participates in an activity approved by the caregiver, provided that the caregiver has acted in accordance with a reasonable and prudent parent standard.



When considering the things we've discussed keep in mind that a caregiver is not liable for harm caused to a child in an out-of-home placement if the child participates in an activity approved by the caregiver, provided that the caregiver has acted in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

## Who Needs to Know About Normalcy?



Now that we've talked about normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standard, let's consider who Needs to Know About Normalcy?



It is extremely important that everyone involved in the Child Welfare System understands their role in providing opportunities for “normal” childhood experiences that promote social skills, education, emotional support, life skills, etc. to each child in foster care. This helps ensure children and youth maintain stability and positive outcomes while placed in out-of-home care. Whether it be a foster family home, a group home or residential treatment setting, normalcy activities will help children and youth with skills essential for positive development.

## Now that you know, what should you do?



Standard  
Normalcy and the  
Reasonable and Prudent  
Parent Standard

### What's next?

**ADVOCATE**

talk

PLAN

- Advocate
- Talk with Children
- Talk with the Worker
- Plan and Provide



Now that you know about normalcy and the prudent parenting standard, what should you do? Advocate for children in your care to be able to participate in normal childhood activities. Talk with the children in your care, as mentioned previously, to learn about them. Talk with the DHHR worker or your homefinder to learn more about the children and come up with ideas to promote normalcy. And finally, make a plan and provide these activities to children in your care.



**This concludes our training**

**Thank  
You!**



Thank you for all of the work you do to help children and youth in WV. By working together we can help ensure that children and youth in foster care in WV can have normal childhood experiences to help ease the trauma of an abnormal situation.