

**REASONABLE AND PRUDENT
PARENT STANDARD**



Promoting Normalcy for Children in Out-of-Home Care

DIVISION OF SAFETY AND PERMANENCE

Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

The Federal “Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act” of 2014 requires that all states implement a Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to increase normalcy for children placed in out-of-home care. This law requires out-of-home care providers to apply reasonable and prudent parenting when making decisions involving children placed in their care so they can allow children to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities.

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard is a standard of decision making that allows an out-of-home care provider to make certain parenting decisions for children placed in their care. Reasonable and prudent parenting is built on careful and sensible decisions that promote child participation in *age or developmentally appropriate* extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. As an out-of-home care provider, you will use reasonable and prudent parenting daily on a child specific basis to allow children placed in your care to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities that encourage normalcy and emotional and developmental growth, while still maintaining the health, safety, best interest, and cultural, religious, and tribal values of child.

What is Normalcy?

Normalcy is the ability to have experiential opportunities for normal growth and development that promotes well-being. Every child has a right to normalcy, and personal growth should not be hindered by a child's placement in out-of-home care.

Does the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard apply to me?

Reasonable and prudent parenting applies to all foster parents, guardians, court-ordered kinship care providers, unlicensed relatives, unlicensed non-relatives, group homes, residential care centers, and shelter care facilities that have placement of a child in out-of-home care. If you are unsure if you are in one of the listed categories or if you should apply the standard to your parenting decisions, contact the child's caseworker. This standard does not apply to respite care service providers or voluntary kinship care providers.

Purpose of Reasonable and Prudent Parenting

To create and promote normalcy:

- Allows children to participate in normal activities without agency barriers

To build relationships:

- Promotes trust and understanding between you and the child
- Improves relationships between children and their peers

To promote personal growth and improve well-being:

- Helps children build and develop skills to promote a successful transition to adulthood
- Allows children to explore and try different interests and activities
- Encourages children to be involved in their own planning

What support will I have when I use reasonable and prudent parenting to make parenting decisions?

You are required to receive training on reasonable and prudent parenting in order to make decisions for a child placed in your care. Ask the child's caseworker or your agency support person for information about how to access this training.

When a child is placed in your home, a caseworker will explain the child-specific information that you should consider when making decisions for the child. The caseworker will gather input from the child and the child's parent/guardian when it is possible and appropriate prior to placement. The caseworker will then provide this information to you these ways:

- DCF-F-CFS-0872A and DCF-F-CFS0872B, Information to Out-of-Home Care Providers Part A and B
- Updates throughout the placement in your home through child and family team meetings

If you feel that you do not have enough information about the child in order to make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision, you may contact the child's caseworker and/or foster care licensuror, if applicable, for additional information about the child. The agency caseworker can help you understand how to apply reasonable and prudent parenting.

You should expect that the child's caseworker will ask you about your reasonable and prudent parenting decisions and normalcy for children placed in your care.

Considerations for making reasonable and prudent parenting decisions

When making a decision using reasonable and prudent parenting, you will consider a combination of factors in relation to the child and the specific situation. Factors include, but are not limited to:

- Child's wishes
- Age, Maturity, Development
- Potential Risk Factors
- Best Interests of the Child
- Opportunity for Growth
- Family-like Life Experience
- Child's Behavioral History
- Court/Legal Considerations
- Cultural, Religious, and Tribal Considerations
- Parent and guardian values

The child must have any necessary training for participation in that activity must be completed, and safety equipment must be provided.

