

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards

Supporting normalcy for Youth who are
in State Guardianship



Viewing this Training...

1. Although this training is a PowerPoint, it has been saved as a video file.
2. Each slide will forward itself shortly after the narration is complete (*about 5 seconds*)
3. You may pause the video on any slide after the narration or anytime you wish to review the slide information in more detail.
4. Take a moment to find the pause and play buttons now.



Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard training requirements

1. All Residential Treatment and Treatment Foster Care agencies must have selected staff view this training in it's entirety and document the completion in the staff file.
2. Selection of staff is at the agency discretion and guided by the 24/7 requirement of staff availability in all facilities.



HR 4980 adds new requirements to our work

Preventing Sex Trafficking and
Strengthening Families Act



Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard

The standard's that caregivers shall use when determining whether to allow a child to participate in normal activities

characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interest of a child while at the same time encouraging the emotional, and developmental growth of the child



Some definitions:

Age or developmentally appropriate:

Activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally appropriate for a child based on the development of cognitive emotional physical and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group.



Some definitions:

Specific to the child:

Activities or items that are suitable for the child based on the developmental stages attained by that child with respect to cognitive emotional physical and behavioral capacities



Normal child activities

- Extracurricular activities
- Enrichment activities
- Cultural activities
- Social activities

Sports, field trips, overnight activities lasting 1 or more days, decisions involving the signing of permission slips, and arranging of transportation for the child to and from such activities



These standards should be applied
to ALL children in DHHS custody
0-18 plus those on v9 status!



What factors do I need to consider when applying the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard?

- Child's age, maturity and developmental level
 - Example: Even though the child is 14, will the PG-13 movie have content that the child isn't able to handle without behavioral issues or strong emotional responses?
- Potential risk factors
 - Example: What is the risk in allowing a child to ride their bike around the neighborhood alone?
- Best interest of the child
 - Example: Is the sleep away camp selected because it fits the child's interest and is what she wants to do?
- Emotional and developmental growth
 - Example: Will being on the soccer team help build the child's self-esteem and develop the social skills he needs?
- Family-like living experience
 - Example: Is this something the caregiver/provider would let other youth in the home do? Is the only thing preventing the activity the fact that they are in State custody?
- Child's behavioral history
 - Example: Given this child's history of underage drinking, is allowing him to stay out late with friends unsupervised a prudent decision?



Important points to remember

- If, after considering all the factors to make a Reasonable and Prudent Parenting decision for a youth, the Caregiver / Provider remains uncertain, they should reach out to the youth's legal guardian for discussion. In the case of Treatment Foster Care, the agency Case manager.
- This law does not seek to inhibit collaboration between the caregiver and the legal guardian of a youth; it only seeks to reduce the need for seeking permissions to allow for a more “normal” experience for youth in care.
- The Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standard decisions **do not** trump existing court orders and/or rulings related to visitation, therapy or other related schedules unless otherwise approved by the child welfare agency and/or the court.
- The Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standard decisions **do not** trump client rights as laid out in the most recent version of the, “Rights Of Recipients Of Mental Health Services Who Are Children In Need Of Service”.



Who should be applying the *RPPS

- Resource parents
- Authorized staff at child care institutions
- Child Welfare Staff



So what does this mean if I am a...

TFC Resource parent



For Treatment Foster Parents you Can:

- Sign permission slips for school
- Make decisions about sleepovers/play dates etc.
- Make decisions on social media use (*can they use it or not; according to Client Rights policy*)
- Take youth on vacation / community outings
- Make decisions about sports they can play
- Make decisions based on the question:
 - *Would I let my child of the same development, age, do this?*



So what does this mean if I am a...

Child care institution (Staff)



Child Care Institution Staff Can:

- Sign permission slips for school
- Make decisions on social media use (*can they use it or not; according to Client Rights policy*)
- Take youth on community outings
- Make decisions about sports they can play
- Make decisions based on the question:
 - *Would I let other residents of the same development, age, do this?*



Policy and Procedure / Residential Facilities and Treatment Foster Homes

- Rules should not be different for kids who are in DHHS care from those in non-DHHS care
- Practice should eliminate any extra barriers to normalcy decisions for kids in care



Policy and Procedure / Residential Facilities and Treatment Foster Homes **Cont....**

- A staff member / foster parent must be on site 24/7 when youth are present, who is trained and designated to make decisions based on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard (RPPS)
- Policy, Practice and Rules at your facility must take Normalcy as it relates to the *RPPS into consideration.



Policy and Procedure Cont.

- You can sign permission slips for school
- You can make decisions about sleepovers/play dates etc.
- You can make decisions on social media use (*can they use it or not; according to Client Rights guidelines*)
- Take youth on facility trips
- Make decisions about sports they can play
- You can make decisions based on the question:
 - *Does our program allow for this and if the answer is yes the fact that a youth is in care shouldn't exclude them*



So what does this mean if I am

A Child Welfare Caseworker?



The department shall:

- Develop and disseminate a standard form to be used by school administrative units to authorize participation by children in the custody of the department in school athletics, field trips and other extracurricular activities.
- This form must be signed once each year by a representative of the department following the enrollment of the child in a school and forwarded to the school administrative unit attended by the child.
- This form provides the necessary legal permission for the child to participate in such activities.
- A child in the custody of the department must secure the signature of a caretaker (*Foster Parent or approved Residential Staff*) on permission slips for specific activities as do other students



In Summary:

- The Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard must be applied by all Residential Treatment and Treatment Foster Care programs.
- There must be at least one staff/caregiver in all facilities 24/7 when youth are present that are trained to administer the RPPS.
- The standard does not prohibit but only reduces the need for consultation with Child Welfare guardians regarding youth engagement in enrichment activities.



For Further information or questions, contact:

Jenni Smith, LCPC-C
Policy and Training specialist
2 Anthony Ave, Augusta, Me. 04333
Jenni.smith@maine.gov

Paul G Maheux, LCSW, MPPM
Children's Behavioral Health Policy Coordinator
2 Anthony Ave, Augusta, Me. 04333
Paul.maheux@maine.gov

