
Aspiranet

~ January 2022 ~

Monthly Training

Reasonable & Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS)

Community Care Licensing requires that Resource Parents receive training regarding the Reasonable & Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) specific to Extracurricular, Enrichment, and Social Activities on an annual basis.

Definition of Reasonable & Prudent Parent Standard

The **Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS)** is defined as “the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child’s health, safety, and best interest.”

Goal of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard, also referred to as the “Prudent Parent Standard”, is meant to “normalize” the lives of minor children in foster care by allowing them opportunities to experience more typical family routines and childhood experiences.

It is intended to empower resource parents to offer the most family-like environment and use prudent decision making that encourages children to participate in activities and have experiences that help develop their life skills and promote overall well-being.

It is meant to eliminate unreasonable limitations on everyday activities so that children and youth in foster care are provided the freedom to grow and develop into adulthood.

Case-by-Case Decision Making:

The most important element when using the RPPS is that prudent decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis. It requires thoughtful consideration and decision-making based on the specific child, as well as the safety and well-being of the other children in the home.

Applying the RPPS:

The prudent parent standard requires resource parents to consider the following in order to determine the appropriate decision:

Resource parents’ Knowledge of Child:

- Length of placement with family: how long has child been in your care? How well do you know the child?
- Child’s history: neglect/abuse/trauma, domestic violence, etc.
- Recent incidents or complaints: AWOL, cutting, suicide talk, abuse allegation, etc.
- Any court orders that could be violated

Child:

- Age: is child at an age that the activity being considered would be appropriate?
- Development & maturity:
 - Is child of sufficient maturity and development to appropriately participate in activity being considered?
 - Does child have any developmental disabilities that must be taken into consideration?

- Mental health:
 - Does child have depression, anxiety, anger management issues,? Are child's coping skills appropriate / sufficient for participation in the activity?
- Behaviors & dangerous propensities: Is child able to safely participate? Does child have history of aggression, suicidal gestures, substance use, AWOL, sexually acts out, etc.
- Physical health: any medical conditions that may impact participation, i.e. asthma, significant allergies, physical disabilities, etc.

Nature of Activity & Inherent Risks

- Type of activity: sports, sleep over, scouts, etc.
- Where will the activity be held, with whom will the foster child be going, and when they will return?
- Risks involved for child
- Level of supervision required for the particular child:
 - What are child's behaviors and needs for supervision? Does activity require constant supervision (i.e., swimming)?
- Safety factors related to activity/action: protective or safety equipment, adult supervision, etc.

Additional Considerations

- Does this decision maintain your child's health, safety and best interests?
- Does this activity encourage the emotional, developmental, or cultural growth of your child?
 - Does it encourage healthy relationships?
 - Support child's feelings about his/her spirituality?
 - Help child with understanding of sexuality and body development?
- Does this activity assist in normalizing life in foster care?

Aspiranet Social Worker Consultation

It is your Aspiranet Social Worker's role to provide information about the child in your care and offer professional input in order that decisions are made that support the best interest of your child. Therefore, it is very important for resource parents to consult with your Aspiranet Social Worker when considering prudent decisions, and some activities will need to be included as part of the youth's Service Plan. Your Aspiranet Social Worker is available for consultation and support. As always, if ever in doubt, please contact Aspiranet.

Extracurricular, Enrichment, and Social Activities

Community Care Licensing requires that a Resource Family promote a child's participation in age and developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, as part of their development and well-being. A Resource Family must also permit a child to participate in activities in a manner that affirms their gender identity or gender expression.

According to Community Care Licensing, a child is entitled to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities that may include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Sports
2. School or after-school activities, including band, dances, and field trips
3. Leisure time, including bike riding, socializing with friends, shopping, and going to the movies
4. Community events, including concerts, dances, plays, and celebrations of special events

5. Dating
6. Overnight activities lasting one or more nights, including sleepovers with friends
7. Babysitting (with some specific requirements met)
8. Having visitors in the home
9. Use of computer equipment or similar electronic devices, if available. Computer equipment and similar electronic devices made available to other children in the household are to be available to a child of similar age and maturity. A Resource Family is not required to incur a cost to provide access to a computer or similar electronic device.
10. Use of a cellular telephone, if available.

There are no regulations that restrict children from participating in these types of activities outside of the foster home or for longer than 24 hours (i.e. a scouting weekend camping trip).

The resource parent is to use the RPPS to determine if the supervising adult activity leader is capable of providing appropriate care and supervision of the foster child in the absence of the resource parent. (i.e., coach, scout leader, etc.).

Restricting Participation in Extra-Curricular/Social Activities for Discipline:

Community Care Licensing has clarified that a resource parent may restrict a foster child from participating in a specific extra-curricular activity as appropriate discipline for misbehavior (i.e. restricted sports participation for specific timeframe).

However, discipline *cannot* be limited to denial of extra-curricular and social activities, as children have the right to participate in these types of activities.

Therefore, other disciplinary options are also to be considered and utilized by the resource parent (i.e. loss of other privileges)

Participation in social media websites:

- Foster children and youth are permitted to participate in social media websites such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Resource parents are to monitor foster children and youth's while using the internet and social media, and strongly encouraged to obtain an internet filter or family safety software.
- Resource parents are also permitted to place reasonable restrictions on internet usage and electronic communication, when appropriate (i.e. inappropriate or excessive use)

Foster youth obtaining piercings, tattoos or permanent cosmetics:

The Prudent Parent Standard does *not* apply to these activities. A resource parent is not authorized to give consent for a minor foster child to obtain a tattoo, any piercing or permanent cosmetics.

