

## Normalcy/Caregiver Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

### SUMMIT COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES

<p><b>ORC:</b> 2151.315; 2151.316; 5103.02; 5103.162</p> <p><b>OAC:</b> 5101:2-5-35; 5101:2-7-11; 5101:2-9-19;</p> <p><b>USC:</b> NA</p> <p><b>CFR:</b> NA</p>	<p><b>ORIGINAL:</b> 9/2016</p> <p><b>REVISION/REVIEW:</b> 10/6/17; 2/11/20; 11/14/2023</p> <p><b>NEXT REVIEW:</b> 11/14/2028</p> <p><b>RELATED FORM(S):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>RELATED PROCEDURE/POLICY(IES):</b>          Foster Youth Bill of Rights; Hold Harmless and Indemnification Agreements; Approvals and Authorizations in Social Services</p>
--	--

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative<br><input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources<br><input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal<br><input type="checkbox"/> Safety & Security<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - All Departments<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Services - Foster & Adoption |
|---|--|

All Staff       Bargaining Unit       Non-Bargaining       Management

**POLICY:**

Summit County Children Services (SCCS) believes that all children benefit from participation in age appropriate social, educational and enrichment experiences that promote well-being. SCCS further recognizes that involvement in these programs helps children to build relationships, develop skills, and prepare for adulthood. SCCS values birth parents' involvement with their children while in foster care and strives to be sensitive to their input.

**PROCEDURE:**

Caregivers are responsible for making decisions for the children in their homes as they relate to normal, everyday activities. Caregivers should use caution and verify that the decisions made do not violate any safety plans, court orders, case plan objectives or SCCS policy. Under Ohio Revised Code Section 5103.162, the "reasonable and prudent parent standard" means the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child's health, safety, and best interests while at the same time encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver or agency shall use when determining whether to allow a child in the care of a resource caregiver to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities. Caregivers should consider the following Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Standard factors and questions when making decisions regarding a child's participation or lack thereof in an activity:

**1. Child's age, maturity and developmental level:**

- a. Does the child function at a level typical of same age peers?  
*Example: Even though a child is old enough to view a PG-13 movie, could the content trigger behavioral issues or strong emotional responses for the child?*

**2. Potential risk factors:**

- a. What are the potential risks of the activity?
- b. What are the safety factors?
- c. What is the supervision level? Is it direct or indirect?

*Example: What is the difference in risk difference of allowing a child to ride with a friend to school vs. riding with a friend to a late-night concert?*

**3. Best interest of the child:**

- a. Is the activity something that the child wants to do and is interested in doing?
- b. How will the child be impacted if the child does or does not participate?

**4. Emotional and developmental growth:**

- a. Does the activity help build the child's self-esteem and develop the social skills needed?

**5. Family-like living experience:**

- a. Is the activity typical of same-age peers?
- b. Is it an activity you would allow your birth/adopted child to do?

**6. Child's behavioral history:**

- a. How does the child behave toward other children and adults?
- b. Is the child typically able to follow house and school rules?
- c. Does the youth have a history of breaking the law?
- d. Does the activity provide more or less structure than what the child is accustomed to?
- e. Would additional supervision or involvement from you allow your child to benefit and participate in this activity?

Caregivers should always contact the child's caseworker and/or the foster home coordinator assigned to the foster home to discuss any requests for a child to participate in an unusual activity (an activity that is not routine for the majority of families and children). Caregivers should communicate concerns and seek guidance in a planful and timely manner. In the event the caregiver and SCCS disagree over the youth participating in an activity, SCCS makes the ultimate decision. Religion and culture are considered in the decision-making process.

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 2151.315, a resource caregiver or person or facility that provides out-of-home care to a child in the custody of SCCS shall be immune from liability in a civil action to recover damages for injury, death, or loss to

person or property caused to the child who participates in an extracurricular, enrichment, or social activity provided that the reasonable and prudent parent standard is used when considering whether to authorize such activity.

### **SCCS Caregiver Activity Related Guideline**

Spend the night at a friend's home. Have a friend over to spend the night.	Caregivers must know the friend's family and have a conversation with the other parent before approving overnights.
Unsupervised time in the community with friends	Caregiver should review the youth's Individual Child Care agreement, and discuss any concerns with the caseworker.
Date	Caregivers should discuss any concerns with the caseworker.
Own a cell phone	Caregivers are encouraged to not allow children to have a cell phone after bedtime and to add parental controls to cell phones.
Have social media accounts	If permitted by the caregiver, the use of social media should be monitored. Caregivers are encouraged to use parental controls.
Get a job or internship	Work experience and internships are encouraged for age-appropriate youth.
Open and maintain a bank account	Youth in care have the right to "their own money and personal property" as age appropriate.
Participate in extracurricular activities such as school dances, field trips, sports, community and cultural events	Caregivers must encourage and support each child in SCCS custody to participate in community school, and recreational and cultural heritage experience as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Permission slips, enrollments, and other forms, requiring guardian signature	Caregivers may sign standard permission slips for school field trips and activities, enrollment forms for Early Intervention and Head Start, and daycare enrollment forms. Caregivers are not permitted to sign permission slips or any forms which have releases of liability or indemnity in the language.
Participate in religious activities	Youth in care have the right to enjoy freedom of religion. Meals must conform to religious dietary restrictions. A caregiver must permit a child in the custody of SCCS to practice the chosen religious faith of the child or child's parents unless it is not in the child's best interests. No religious procedure can take place without the approval of the birth family, nor can medical treatment be secured if it conflicts with religious tenets or practices unless otherwise authorized by law and with approval by SCCS.
Ride in a car with a friend who has a license. Ride in a car with an adult, such as a friend's parent.	Any person transporting a child in the custody of SCCS in a motor vehicle must have a valid driver's license and must carry liability insurance. The vehicle must be in a safe condition according to state laws and rules regarding use of seat belts/car seats apply.

	Caregivers are expected to consider the Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard when making transportation decisions for children in custody.
Ride the city bus / verified ride share service	Caregivers will encourage and support youth to participate in independent living programs and teach independent living skills in appropriate situations.
Obtain driver's license	Youth in custody may obtain a license while in the custody of SCCS, per the Approvals and Authorizations in Social Services policy/procedure. The caregiver must be willing to add the child to their car insurance.
Ride motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and ATV's.	Children in the custody of SCCS may not be transported by motorcycles or other similar types of vehicles.  Caregivers may allow youth in custody to ride dirt bikes and ATV's on a recreational basis provided the Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard is utilized. Caregivers must ensure youth are riding motorized vehicles in accordance with the recommended age requirements and guidelines. Youth must have a helmet, successfully complete a safety course, and there must be adult supervision.
Participate in activities with weapons such as hunting and target shooting	SCCS requires that all weapons be stored in an inoperable condition in a locked area inaccessible to children.  Caregivers may allow youth in custody to participate in supervised activities involving weapons provided the Normalcy and Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard is utilized. Such activities could include but are not limited to archery and paintball in the context of camp or Scout Programs. Hunting may be permitted on a case-by-case basis with SCCS and parental approval, proof of successful completion of a hunter safety course, and adult supervision.
Haircuts, hair styling	Whenever possible, SCCS attempts to reach a consensus with the birth family, caregivers, and the youth (when age appropriate) on haircuts and hair styling.
Permanently alter appearance (tattoo, piercings).	Tattoos and piercing are not permitted for youth in temporary custody without permission of the birth family. A child may have existing tattoos and piercings prior to entering SCCS custody.
Be responsible for prescribed medication or over-the-counter medication.	Caregivers must administer prescription drugs to children in the custody of SCCS for whom the medication was prescribed according to the physician instructions. Children including teenagers may not take medication without adult supervision.
Children's diet / formula	Whenever possible, SCCS attempts to coordinate with the birth family, caregiver, medical provider (when applicable), and child (when age appropriate) regarding changes in the child's diet or formula.

Have picture appear in media such as newspaper or website.	Children in the temporary custody of SCCS are not permitted to appear in any media site without the permission of SCCS. Publication of a child's name/likeness by a school (such as directory information) will generally be permitted unless against the child's best interest.
Otherwise unspecified activity	Use the factors above and consult with the SCCS caseworker and/or supervisor for guidance where appropriate.