

Supporting Normalcy for Children and Young Adults in Substitute Care and the Application of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

Why are we talking about normalcy, youth involvement in extracurricular activities, and the reasonable and prudent parent standard?

Federal and state laws now require Oregon Department of Human Services to take certain actions to promote normalcy for children and young adults (youth) in care, in order to improve opportunities and well-being. Below are some links to recently enacted state and federal laws that specifically address efforts to promote normalcy and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent (RPP) standard.

[State HB 2908](#)

[State HB 2890](#)

[Federal HR 4980 \(See Section 111\)](#)

How can the child welfare system promote normalcy for children and young adults in substitute care?

- Provide substitute caregivers an approach or standard (the RPP standard) to help them make good decisions about youth participation in appropriate activities. The RPP standard is defined below.
- Give substitute caregivers greater flexibility to make more decisions about youth involvement in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities.
- Ensure substitute caregivers apply the RPP standard to decisions about youth participation in activities.



What is the Reasonable and Prudent Parent (RPP) standard?

RPP means the standard, characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the health, safety and best interests of a child or young adult while encouraging the emotional and developmental growth of the child or young adult, that a substitute caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child or young adult in substitute care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural and social activities.

When applying the RPP standard, the substitute caregiver must consider: the age, maturity, and developmental level of the child or young adult; the nature and inherent risks of harm; and the best interests of the child or young adult, based on information known by the caregiver.

What are some examples of extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities to which the RPP standard may apply?

- **Sports and physical fitness:** baseball/softball/t-ball, basketball, bowling, camping, cheerleading, cycling, fishing, football, golf, gymnastics, hiking, hockey, horseback riding, martial arts, roller skating, soccer, Special Olympics events, snowboarding, skateboarding, swimming, tennis, track and field, volleyball, yoga
- **Music:** band, orchestra, guitar lessons, vocal choir, hand-bell choir, jazz or string ensemble
- **Arts:** ceramics, dance, jewelry making, mixed-media, painting, photography, sculpture, theatre.
- **Groups:** Scouts, Youth Group, Gay Straight Alliance, Future Farmers of America, 4H, Future Business Leaders of America.
- **Clubs:** chess, debate, drama, poetry, book
- **Other cultural activities:** attending spiritual activities, holiday events, pow wows, Quinceañeras, Bar Mitzvahs or Bat Mitzvahs, reading/listening to/classes re: poetry, story-telling, or other spoken word of various cultures, language classes, cultural festivals, film festivals and movies in various languages and celebrating various cultures (e.g. DisOrient Asian American Film Festival), cultural dance groups (e.g. African dance classes, Irish dance, Chinese Lion Dance), culturally-specific sports activities, music events of various cultures (e.g. African American drumming courses, hip hop education/dance classes/production, DJ and lyric writing classes, origins of jazz education), culturally-specific art activities (e.g. African American arts and crafts), volunteering for local community-specific groups





(e.g. Urban League, NAACP, APANO, Q Center, Centro Latino Americano), cultural mentoring programs (e.g. Rites of Passage at Lane Community College), watching culturally-specific documentaries about history and social issues, researching history of race in Oregon, going to culturally-specific library events and university lectures, interviewing community elders, participating in culturally-specific leadership camps, spending time with kith and kin as a way to connect youth with their culture

- **Other normalcy activities:** outings with friends and friends’ families, accessing the internet, listening to music, posting photos on social media like Instagram, going to games, attending community events, school dances, plays, music performances, going shopping, attending library story times, visiting indoor parks, bouncy houses, attending field trips, overnight activities lasting one or more days, transportation to and from extracurricular activities.



What are the benefits to youth in substitute care?



We all need exposure to opportunities and experiences which help us develop skills, try new things, make mistakes, face and overcome challenges, experience success, and feel pride in our identity and accomplishments. That’s how we learn, grow, reach our full potential, experience well-being, and thrive! This is especially important for youth in substitute care, whose experiences often include loss and changes in their living environment, school setting, and contact with important people.

Relationships with others (friends, caring adults, coaches, mentors) help us build protective factors, be resilient, develop social skills, envision new opportunities, and establish a safety net. Through our involvement in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities, we increase our relationships and connections with others.

Who needs to be thinking about these concepts?

The caseworker-

- engaging the youth, substitute caregivers, and parents in conversation about activities;
- exploring potential barriers and assisting with solutions;
- incorporating these inquiries and discussions into our regular practices including monthly contacts, developing the case plan and case plan reviews, and reporting information to the court



The certifier-

- sharing information about the RPP standard with substitute caregivers, assessing potential caregivers' ability to apply this standard, and supporting substitute caregivers' success in applying this standard to decisions about involvement in activities

The substitute caregiver-

- talking with the youth and the caseworker about opportunities and activities with which the youth is involved or may like to be involved;
- using the RPP standard to make decisions about activities;
- understanding decisions that may require additional conversation or permission (e.g. additional permission needed when activities involve travel out of state or out of country, when there are safety considerations as part of the Case Plan or Supervision Plan, when the youth would be outside the supervision of the caregiver for more than 72 hours, when an activity includes use of firearms- e.g. hunting, target practice, Hunter Safety Course, and when the youth is seeking driver's training, permits or license)



The court-

- making findings about whether the Department has ensured that the RPP standard was applied and whether youth are being given ongoing opportunities to be engaged in activities.

