

Normalcy for Youth in Care

Working together to make sure children are safe and thriving

Every child has the right to be safe and well cared for without compromising their development or overall well-being. We encourage all of our resource parents to help support the youth's interests as much as possible, and we encourage all children in care to participate in age-appropriate activities. By working together, we can make sure youth in care have every possible opportunity for healthy development.

Normalcy DOs & DON'Ts

DO Welcome birth parents to stay involved, along with any other adults or peers who mean a lot to the child.

DO Make sure decisions are being made in the best interest of the youth

DON'T Make friends or family members complete background checks before allowing the child to spend time with them.

DO Remember that youth can ride in a car with friends, parents, and extended relatives as long as you are comfortable with it.

DO Be clear about expectations and consequences.

DON'T Threaten to move the youth based on mistakes or misbehaviors like:

- **Lying**
- **Arguing**
- **Cursing**
- **Low motivation**
- **Not following rules**
- **School problems**
- **Impulsive decisions**
- **Poor follow-through**



Tips for Resource Parents

You are the primary decision maker and are responsible for making sure the child is healthy, safe, thriving, and experiencing emotional growth. Please try to:

- Remember birth parents and other professionals can be helpful if you need advice on a decision
- Understand the youth's history and try to make sure your rules and expectations are made for this individual youth, taking this history into consideration
- Support normal age or developmentally-appropriate activities as required by law, which not only benefits the youth in care but also minimizes liability concerns
- Maintain and create opportunities with extended family by making an effort to get to know each other and help nurture these important social connections
- Remember who to turn to if a tough situation comes up and you are not able to handle it alone:
 - The child's case worker is there to support you and can reach out for additional help if needed
- You can ask for the situation to be reviewed by the Family Support Team or through a Team-Decision Making Meeting



Tips for Teens

- Be familiar with your legal rights and feel free to ask your caseworker for help understanding them
- Use and reference the resource guide given to you when you came into care, called "What's It All About: A Guide for Youth in Out of Home Care"
- If you are over the age of 14, remember you can invite people to support you during any meeting or conference
- Make sure you discuss things like concerns, questions, and your goals with your caregiver and your caseworker
- Remember, you have the choice to stay in the same school or enroll in a new school right away



Social networking

- Resource parents and youth are allowed to post photos of youth in care on social media as long as they do not say the youth is in foster care
- Youth are able to use social media accounts unless their safety plans or guidelines/restrictions applying to the general public do not allow it

Tips for Birth Parents

- There is a loss of control when children are in state custody and it is okay to acknowledge and talk it through
- Be involved in the process and work with your child, caseworker, and resource parent



Family Vacations

- You do not need approval to take a foster child on a family vacation unless the trip will require a passport
- We do ask that you notify the caseworker and birth family of your vacation plans as a courtesy



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