

# Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

Training for Residential Child Care Facilities



# What is the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard? (RPPS)

- From the Prevent Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014
- Recognizes the need to make effort to normalize the lives of children receiving services
- Effective in Alaska October 1, 2015



# Definitions



- Reasonable: Having sound judgment; fair and sensible, not excessive or extreme.
- Prudent: Acting with or showing care and thought for the future, wise in handling practical matters



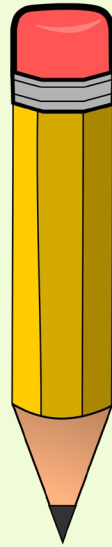
# Characterized by...

- A careful and sensible parental decision that maintains the health, safety and best interest of a child
- At the same time encourages emotional and developmental growth of the child
- Used when determining whether to allow participation in enrichment, cultural and social activities to promote normalcy in a youth's life



# RPPS & Foster Care

In the past, State child welfare agencies focused primarily on safety and protection and often restricted activities for youth in care. The exclusion of youth from activities enjoyed by their peers was not only stigmatizing, but also deprived youth of valuable learning opportunities.



Today, the critical importance of social and emotional well-being and the essential role of normalcy and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children and youth in care are increasingly recognized.



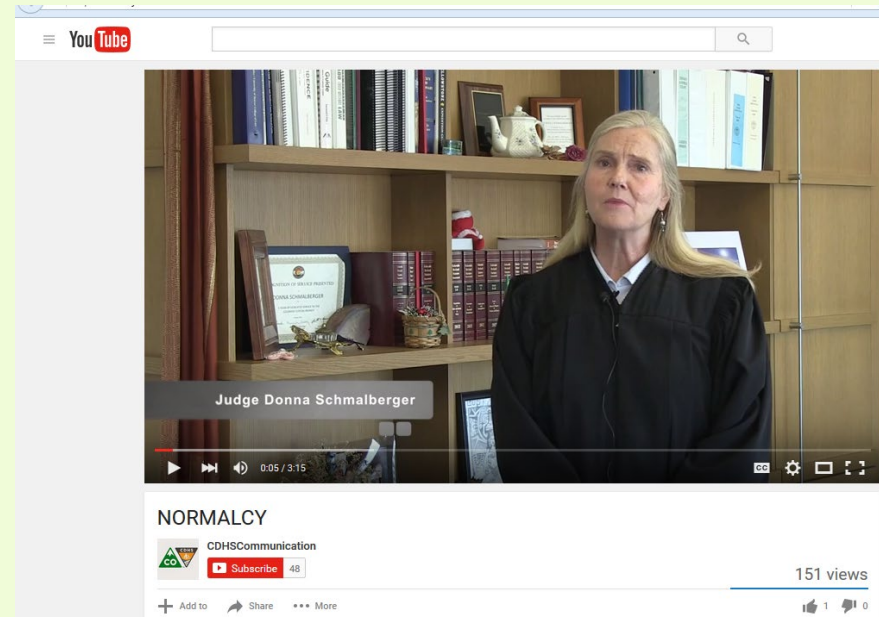
# RPPS & Residential Child Care Facilities

- Required for any Facility which may accept a youth in OCS custody and/or receive Title IV-E funding.
- Works to promote normalcy for children receiving services
- Allows facilities to decide if the child may engage in certain activities
- Allows facilities to promote engagement in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities; Including sports, field trips, and overnight activities (if applicable)
- Requires facilities to follow court orders and judgements
- Requires OCS to provide youth 14 years and older a list of their rights while in custody



# Watch: Normalcy & Why it's Important to Youth

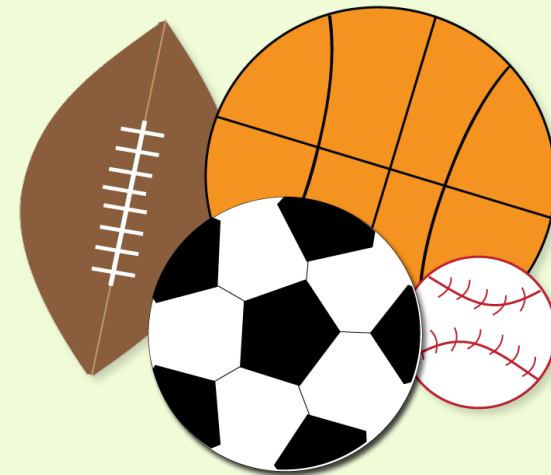
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31b71YGXb80>



# Normalcy & Residential Care

Refers to allowing youth in out-of-home care to experience childhood and adolescence in ways similar to their peers. This includes opportunities to participate in activities and experiences such as

- Recreational and community activities
- Choices in personal style
- Cultural and religious expression
- School clubs and sports





# Promoting Normalcy – Factors Involved (Youth)

- Racial and Ethnic Identity
- Hair & Skin Considerations
- Religion and Spirituality
- Sexual and Gender Identity
- Pregnant Youth

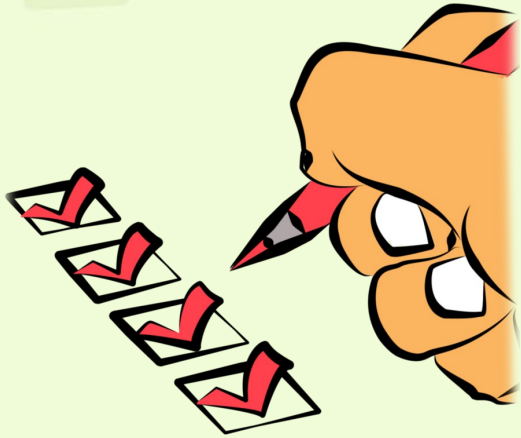


# Promoting Normalcy – Factors Involved (Facility)

- Location
- Level of Care
- Population Served
- Licensed Specialization(s)



# Elements of RCCF Compliance with RPPS



- Written RPPS Policy
- Appointed Designated Decision-Maker
- RPPS Staff training



# Licensing Regulations And State Statutes

- RPPS does **not** exempt a Facility from any licensing regulations
- RPPS requires facilities to follow court orders and judgments which may impact those decisions
- RPPS still require a Facility to seek permission for high risk activities



# Questions to Ask

- What can be done to normalize life for youth during treatment?
- Will milieu allow for activities that a youth of the same age and development may normally participate in?
- Does current admission paperwork empower the Facility to make RPPS-related decisions?
- At what point during treatment can a youth's limitations or restrictions be adjusted?



# RPPS & Activities while in a Facility

- A large portion of the RPPS-related decisions made by a Facility will involve a youth's participation in activities
- A Facility should make a careful and sensible decision through the knowledge of the child's age and developmental level.
- A Facility is expected to consider the health, safety and best interests of a child, while balancing the decision with a need to encourage emotional and developmental growth in a child.



# Steps to Using RPPS for Activity-related Decisions



**Step 1:** Know what the regulations or policies (if any) are established around the activity.

**Step 2:** Evaluate the activity:

- Is the activity developmentally appropriate and safe for the child involved?
- Is the activity reasonable for his or her age, development and experience?
- Do I need or want to consult the child's caseworker?



## Step 3 (Optional)

If the decision is one you think others on the child's team may disagree with, outline the decision-making process:

- Think about what would be considered normal for a youth this age and at this developmental level
- What you understand the regulation and/or internal policies to say
- How you made your decision based on the individual circumstances and needs of the child





# Things to Remember: RPPS Activity-Related Decisions

- A RPPS decision is rarely universally “right” or “wrong”
- An activity may not be appropriate for every child admitted for care
- A Facility must take into consideration each individual youth and his or her situation and circumstances when making an decision
- A Facility may need to obtain more information or seek guidance from other members of a youth’s team before making a decision



# Benefits & Goals of RPPS

- Youth Resilience: Helping youth manage stress and enhance their ability to function well when faced with stressors, challenges, or adversity; the outcome is personal growth and positive change.
- Social Connections: Helping youth have healthy, consistent relationships with people, institutions, the community
- Child's Social and Emotional Competence: Helping Youth develop skills and attitudes that are essential for forming an independent identity and preparing for a productive, responsible, and satisfying adulthood



# Keys for Staff

- Be conscious of stigmas associated with In-patient or Residential Care
- Be able to identify and reach the Facility's Designated Decision Maker
- Know where to find the RPPS policy and/or a youth's signed acknowledgement



# Final thoughts & Takeaways: RPPS & Facilities

- The Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) affects all licensed Residential Child Care Facilities in Alaska
- Reasonable efforts to normalize a youth's life while in residential treatment can provide them with long-term benefits
- It is expected and reasonable that RPPS standards will vary by Facility based upon a variety of environmental factors
- Residential Licensing will ensure compliance by periodically reviewing a Facility's RPPS policy and confirming the Designated Decision-Maker



# Have Questions? Need More Info?

## Residential Licensing Contacts:

Carl Jacobs CCLSI (907)334-2486 or [carl.jacobs@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.jacobs@alaska.gov)

Tricia Skitt CCLSII (907)334-2496 or [tricia.skitt@alaska.gov](mailto:tricia.skitt@alaska.gov)

## Office of Children's Services Contacts:

Main Line: (907)269-4000 or a child's Case Manager

