



Joette Katz
Commissioner

DEPARTMENT of CHILDREN and FAMILIES
Making a Difference for Children, Families and Communities



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

MEMORANDUM

To: DCF Licensed Congregate Care Facilities and Child Placing Agencies

From: Brian Faraci, DCF Program Manager
Jenifer Sisk, DCF Program Manager
Jim McPherson, DCF Program Manger

Re: Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard Online Training

Date: December 4, 2015

This past July, Governor Malloy signed into law Public Act 15-199, An Act Expanding Guardianship Opportunities for Children and Implementing the Provisions of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. Effective July 1st, this legislation makes a number of changes to child welfare practices in order to comply with new federal legislation. An important component of this act is the establishment of a Reasonable Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) which caregivers are expected to adhere to when making decisions around a child's ability to participate in normal childhood activities. The act permits a caregiver (e.g. foster parent, congregate care provider) to allow a child in his or her care under a DCF or Court-ordered service or safety plan to participate in normal childhood activities without prior DCF or Court approval. The activities must (1) comply with the service or safety plan and (2) be age or developmentally appropriate based on a reasonable prudent parent standard. If applicable, the child's parent or guardian must be given an opportunity to provide input into the development of the child's service or safety plan. The Social Worker must also communicate to the caregiver the parents' opinions on the child's participation in normal childhood activities so that the caregiver may consider them when providing the child's care.

In order to implement the provisions of the RPPS, the Department has developed an online PowerPoint training session which all staff will be expected to complete. To access the training, click on the link below, listen to the voice-over for each slide, and upon completion print out the certificate of attendance and hand it in to your supervisor. The training session will likely take no more than 20 to 30 minutes to complete. In addition to the PowerPoint, a Frequently Asked Question document, and an RPPS Checklist are also provided to take with you as reference guides.

For congregate care facilities it is expected that all direct care staff, supervisors, program managers, and clinicians will take the online training and print out and retain the completion certificate for review by DCF Licensing. According to the state and federal legislation each congregate care facility must have at least one person on each shift designated as the "onsite official" who can make decisions regarding a youth's participation in normal childhood activities. This "onsite official" can be available in person at the facility or available by phone.

For child placing agencies the expectation is that all foster parents, social workers, and program administrators will complete the online training and retain documentation as referenced above. Both congregate facilities and child placing agencies should facilitate more in-depth conversations about the RPPS during staff meetings, training sessions, and foster parent support meetings.

Both congregate care facilities and child placing agencies will be expected to revise policies and procedures to address the practice changes identified in the RPPS. Policy guideline documents are also included in this email to aid you in identifying the policy areas that will need modification.

Research has consistently shown that children who are engaged in normal, developmentally appropriate social, cultural, and extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in negative behaviors such as running away and abusing substances. The clear vision of the RPPS is to eliminate barriers to a child's participation in such activities whenever possible. It is part of a broader national effort to establish a semblance of normalcy in the lives of the children in our care. Like our own children, DCF-involved children deserve the opportunities to be invited to birthday parties, participate on sports teams, and attend sleepovers. The RPPS is an important step in making this vision become a reality.

http://www.proprofs.com/training/course/?title=rpps_21