



Perspectives on Normalcy Handout: Empowering Caregiver Decision-Making

This handout is part of the series, “Perspectives on Normalcy: Videos and Discussion Questions.” It is designed to facilitate discussion about the issues raised in the video, “Community-Based Provider: Empowering Caregiver Decision-Making.”

About the Interviewee:

Stephen is the president and CEO of Partnership for Strong Families, which provides foster care and adoption services in 13 counties in North Central Florida. Stephen is also an attorney who has worked in the field of family law. He has worked on legislation to implement normalcy for children and youth in out-of-home care and helps guide it in practice through his current work with caregiver families.

Quotes From the Interviewee:

“I think it is important for the young person and the caregiver to have a conversation early in the placement about expectations and desires when it comes to normalcy. To the extent the child knows what activities he or she would like to participate in, the caregiver should be able to respond with a ‘yes,’ a ‘no’ (with a reasonable explanation), or a ‘maybe,’ with the conditions clearly set out. A balanced negotiation can take place, with the understanding of when future activities should be discussed, meaning the child should be trusted to come to the caregiver when it is an experience that should be agreed upon before doing it.” – *Stephen*

“The most important components for normalcy are that caregivers treat children as their own and that children demonstrate responsibility and trust when given opportunities and freedom. If both of those are present, normalcy should come easily.” – *Stephen*

Questions for Discussion:

- ▶ What do systems need to do to comply with the reasonable and prudent parent standard (RPPS)?
- ▶ What things struck you about the way Florida implemented the RPPS?
- ▶ What activities would children and youth want to attend, taking into consideration age, how responsible the children are, and their maturity level?
- ▶ In training both staff and resource families, what important things do they need to know to promote healthy development and normalcy?
- ▶ What liability issues might be raised in the implementation of the RPPS?

To access the video, please visit <https://capacity.childwelfare.gov/states/focus-areas/foster-care-permanency/perspectives-normalcy/provider-video>.