

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards (CW Policy 14.26)

Caregivers shall apply the reasonable and prudent parenting standard (RPPS) when determining whether to allow a child in foster care to participate in particular extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. This includes assessing and approving the plan of supervision for youth engaging in activities while not under the direct supervision or oversight of the caregiver.

What is RPPS?

The standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain children's health, safety, well-being and best interests while at the same time encouraging their emotional and developmental growth.

Does RPPS apply to group homes?

Yes, group homes must have at least one RPP designee but it is recommended that at least two are designated to ensure that decisions are not delayed due to the RPP's absence. The designated RPP must meet the following requirements:

1. Be in the role of Human Services Professional or higher leadership position.
2. Must be at least 25 years of age or 10 years older than the youth.

How should the RPP be applied?

1. Day-to-day and routine/typical caregiving decisions
2. Permission to participate in school, extracurricular, sports, social / cultural enrichment, field trips and similar activities.

What is not covered by the RPPS?

DFCS, birth parents, and or juvenile court continue to have authority over major decisions that have significant effect on the life of a child in foster care.

How do birth parents factor into RPPS?

RPPS and Partnership Parenting are complementary. Partnership Parenting creates shared parenting relationships between birth and foster parents. It provides foster parents with the opportunity to help birth parents learn by setting a positive parenting example for them to follow.

In fact RPPS works best within the context of Partnership Parenting—that is foster caregivers and birth parents working in partnership to make parenting decisions together to the extent possible.



Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards: KNOW Before You Say NO!

KNOW: *The goal of the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards is to ensure that children and youth in foster care have as normal a childhood experience as possible. In order to accomplish this goal, foster caregivers are empowered to make typically parenting decisions without having to obtain administrative approvals from DFCS or a CPA. So, before you say “no”, KNOW what that you can consider saying “yes” if the activity is age and developmentally appropriate and falls within the reasonable and prudent parenting guidelines.*

Before you say “no”, think about the following...

Is it age appropriate?

Is it developmentally appropriate?

Will it enhance the child’s social, emotional, or developmental well-being?

Does it fall within your decision-making power (RPPS)?

Has the child been placed long enough for you to make reasonable and prudent decisions about them?

Do you understand the child's developmental needs?

What information has DFCS or agency provided you about that child? Have they shared any precautions that you need to consider?

Will the activity expose the child to undue risk or safety issues?

What would it mean for the child if said “no” or if you said “yes”?

If this were your child, would you approve the request?

Would the average parent in your community make the same decision?

Those are just a few questions to think about; the list is not exhaustive. Foster caregivers must continually weigh decisions against many factors including each individual child’s needs, abilities, maturity, and other factors. Remember, if you need help making the decision, it’s okay to still ask DFCS or your CPA.

**Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
Substitute Caregivers: Babysitting & Overnight
Guidelines**

The “reasonable and prudent parent standard” (RPPS) applies to both babysitting and overnights for children and youth. The foster caregiver may approve the use of substitute caregivers for babysitting and overnight stays without prior approval from the agency as long as it meets the guidelines below.

The RPPS standard characterized is by **careful and sensible** parental decisions that **maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child** while at the same time **encouraging the emotional and developmental** growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.

Supplemental Caregivers Guidelines



Make a reasonable and prudent decision regarding the Substitute Caregiver.

A Substitute Caregiver (i.e., babysitters)



Must be at least 18 years old, reliable and competent to provide care needed.



Prepared and able to meet the needs of children placed in their temporary care.



Explained the DFCS discipline policy and provided with behavior management instructions.



Provide information regarding care needs as well as emergency contact information.

Note: Substitute Caregivers are classified as either routine or occasional. Routine substitute caregivers must be screened¹ and approved by the agency. **Routine care** means care provided more than once a week, usually at designated times. These individuals must be screened by DFCS case manager. **Occasional care** means care provided once a week or less on varying days and times. Contact the agency to ensure that screenings are conducted before an occasional caregiver becomes routine.

Overnight/Sleepovers Guidelines



Make a reasonable and prudent decision regarding the overnight/sleep over request.



May not exceed two nights without permission of DFCS .



Caregiver must be able to meet the needs of children placed in their temporary care.



Explained the DFCS discipline policy and provided with behavior management instructions.



Out of state travel regardless of length must be pre-approved by DFCS and the court.



Provide information regarding care needs as well as emergency contact information.

¹ -Screenings must include DFCS Safety Screenings (DFCS Policy 19.9), Sexual Offender's Registry, Board of Pardons and Parole and Department of Corrections, and state criminal history check (GCIC) – (DFCS Policy 19.8).



Caregiver Child Safety Agreement

Date of Review: _____ Agency/Department Representative: _____

Purpose: Initial Approval /Placement Re-Evaluation Corrective Action Plan

Other (including Routine Caregiver)

Foster Parent Manual—The Foster Parent Manual is your guide to understanding safety, supervision and service expectations of caregivers. Standards of care for children in foster care are stringent due to the uniqueness of the situation. Caregivers must abide by the information in the Foster Parent Manual. Your agency/department should have provided you with a copy of the Foster Parent Manual. [It can also be accessed here.](#)

To ensure the safety and well-being of the children placed in (my/our) home, (I/we) agree to the following:

- Review and abide by the information in the Foster Parent Manual

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Household Composition/ Significant Events—Your home's approval has been based on the current household information and the safety screens of the current household members listed below.

List Household Members:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

To ensure the safety and well-being of the children placed in (my/our) home, (I/we) agree to the following report any of the following to the agency/department within one (1) business day of occurrence:

- Report any additions to the household (regular resident or re-occurring overnight resident);
- Report any 911 calls from the residence;
- Report if law enforcement or the fire/EMS department is dispatched to the residence
- Report any arrests, convictions or other law enforcement involvement with any household member; and
- Report any other such significant event.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Corporal Punishment—DFCS policy prohibits the use of corporal or unusual punishment on a child in its custody. Children removed from their parents or other caretakers due to neglect or abuse must be disciplined in ways that do no perpetuate the physical and emotional pain experienced as a result of past inappropriate parenting practices.

To ensure the safety and well-being of the children placed in (my/our) home, (I/we) agree to the following:

- To refrain from the use of any corporal or unusual punishment on a child placed in (my/our) home, including, but not limited to the following: spanking, slapping, switching, shaking, pinching, biting, twisting, or pulling; tying with rope, withholding food, force feeding, denying mail; denying appropriate contacts with family, denying contact with worker; degrading child or child's family, or humiliating child; creating fear, anger and anxiety, locking child in a room, closet or outside the home; group punishment or delegating older children to administer punishment; destroying the child's property and any other practices which may physically or emotionally damage the child.
- When managing children's behavior, use the suggested alternative methods (or other effective means of discipline) from the Foster Parent Manual and in consultation with the agency/department.
- Seek on-going information/training to build and enhance (my/our) child behavioral management skills.
- Immediately inform the agency / department of the need for assistance in managing the behavior of any child placed in (my/our) home.
- Carefully review and abide by the information on discipline and behavior management in the Foster Parent Manual. Caregiver Child Safety Agreement (Rev 04/17)

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Supervision of Children— Caregivers must provide safe, responsible and appropriate supervision of children at all times.

Names of Routine Substitute Caregivers:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Provide appropriate adult supervision for the children in my care at all times;
- Ensure that any substitute caregivers routinely provided care at designated days/times are approved in advance by the agency/ department.
- Ensure that children are not placed under the care or supervision of anyone under the age of 18 years.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Supervision of Children—*continued*:

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Ensure that children are not left unattended in a motor vehicle.
- Obtain approval from the agency prior to leaving older children unsupervised. These youth must have a Graduated Independence Plan (GIP) before being left unsupervised.
- Carefully review and abide by the information on safe supervision in the Foster Parent Manual.
- We agree that we will not use any illegal substances, abuse alcohol by consuming it in excess amounts, or abuse legal prescription and/or nonprescription drugs by consuming them in excess amounts or using them contrary to as indicated.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Firearm Safety—*Caregivers must ensure that children placed do not handle or have access to firearms. Caregivers must take precautions to ensure that preventable injury or death from firearms does not occur.*

of Firearms in the home _____ Location of Firearms _____

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Inform DFCS of the presence of firearms in (my/our) home, now or at any time in the future.
- Secure all firearms in the home, using a commercially available safety lock designed for this purpose, or in a storage cabinet that securely.
- Keep all firearms unloaded; store firearms and ammunition separately.
- Ensure that any routine substitute caregivers are approved in advance by the agency/department.
- Never allow children placed in the home to handle guns.
- Carefully review and abide by the information on gun safety in the Foster Parent Manual.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Motor Vehicle and Bicycle Safety—*According to national statistics, motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for children ages 5-14. Caregivers must take precautions to ensure the safety of children in motor vehicles including following all state laws dictating car seat use and restrictions regarding children riding in the front seat.*

Children must wear helmets while bicycling.

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Secure children under age 8 in a federally approved child safety restraint seat that is properly installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Primary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Secondary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Motor Vehicle and Bicycle Safety continued

Children must wear helmets while bicycling.

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Secure children under 8 years of age in the rear seat of the vehicle with federally approved and properly installed safety seat belts.
- Ensure that children/youth under 18 years do not ride in the bed of a pickup truck at any time.
- Obtain permission from the agency/department prior to allowing a child to ride as a passenger or driver on any of the following: automobile (as driver only); motorcycle; motorbike; all-terrain vehicles; small, high-speed water craft and other similarly motorized vehicles.
- Ensure that children wear a properly fitted helmet while bicycling or engaged in other approved motor vehicle activities where a helmet is indicated (all-terrain vehicles, for example).
- Carefully review and abide by the information on motor vehicle safety in the Foster Parent Manual.

Primary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Secondary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Water Safety—*Children are at high risk for accidental drowning. Foster parents whose residence is equipped with an in-ground /above ground swimming pool, or who live on a waterfront property, are required to take extra safety precautions with children placed in their care.*

Does the caregiver have an in-ground/above ground pool? Yes No

Does the caregiver live on a waterfront property? Yes No

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Know or learn how to swim
- Hold a current certificate in CPR/First Aid.
- Obtain a certificate in Basic Water Rescue.
- Enroll all children 3 years of age and older placed in the home in a swimming class taught by a certified instructor.
- Foster Parent or a substitute caretaker must provide direct supervision of children when around bodies of water (does not include lifeguards and pool personnel).
- Ensure the compliance with any local or state ordinances regarding pools or waterfront property.
- Secure the entire perimeter of the pool area with a fence and locked gate of sufficient height to prevent the entry of young children (any alternate water safety precautions require approval by the DFCS Placement & Permanency Services Director.)
- Complete all water safety requirements within one (1) year of the child's placement in the home.
- Carefully review and abide by the information on water safety in the Foster Parent Manual.
- Inform DFCS immediately prior to adding an in-ground/above ground swimming pool.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Motor Vehicle “Hot Car” Safety

Children are sensitive to heat as their body temperature can heat up three to five times faster than an adult’s. Children will die if their body temperature exceeds 107 degrees. Even at a temperature of 60 degrees outdoors, the temperature inside a car can exceed 110 degrees. At initial placement caregivers should be reminded of motor vehicle safety as it pertains to hot cars and steps they can take to avoid related serious injury or death. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends the following precautions to take in order to avoid child heatstroke.

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle – even if the windows are partially open or the engine is running and the air conditioning is on;
- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle–front and back– before locking the door and walking away;
- Ask the childcare provider to call if the child doesn’t show up for care as expected;
- Do things that serve as a reminder that a child is in the vehicle, such as placing a phone, purse or briefcase in the back seat to ensure no child is accidentally left in the vehicle, or writing a note or using a stuffed animal placed in the driver’s view to indicate a child is in the car seat;
- Always lock your vehicle when not in use and store keys out of a child’s reach, so children cannot enter unattended. Teach children that a vehicle is not a play area;
- A child in distress due to heat should be removed from the vehicle as quickly as possible and rapidly cooled.

Primary Caregiver's initials here:

Secondary Caregiver's initials here:

Safe to Sleep for Babies

Caregivers of infants ages 0-12 months old must be informed of conditions that constitute a safe sleeping environment and that reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as “crib death”.

At minimum, caregivers should practice the three primary safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) commonly referred to as the ‘ABC’s’ of safe sleep.

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- **Alone** – Ensure the baby’s sleep area should be close to, but separate from, where caregivers and others sleep. The sleep area should be free of soft objects, toys, and loose bedding.
- **Back** – Ensure that infants are always placed on their back to sleep for naps and at night.
- **Crib** – Ensure to place infants on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet. Ensure that the child’s sleep area contains no blankets, quilts, crib bumpers, or toys.

Primary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Secondary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Environmental and Animal Safety—*Caregivers must ensure that the home environment (inside and outside) is clean, free of environmental hazards and provides a comfortable, livable atmosphere. Household pets may not be dangerous or aggressive; exotic pets (snakes, wild life, etc.) require special approval. Additionally, caregivers must protect children from secondhand smoke (SHS). Smoke-free homes and cars provide the best protection against SHS for children. SHS can worsen asthma and increase the risk of bronchitis, lung and ear infections in children.*

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Maintain our home environment (inside and outside) to ensure that it is clean, free of environmental hazards and provides a comfortable, livable atmosphere.
- I/We, and any visiting guests, will not smoke in the family foster home, in any vehicle used to transport the child, or in the presence of the child in foster care.
- Provide close supervision of children when around animals.
- Properly secure animals as necessary with a leash, fence or cage, etc.
- Notify agency /department immediately of any dog/pet attacks or bites sustained by a child placed in your home.
- Take necessary precautions to protect children from SHS particularly those with medical conditions that can be worsened by exposure to SHS.
- Carefully review and abide by the information on animal and environmental safety in the Foster Parent Manual.

Primary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Secondary
Caregiver's
initials here:

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards—*Caregivers shall apply the reasonable and prudent parenting standard when determining whether to allow a child in foster care to participate in particular extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.*

In keeping with this requirement, (I/we) agree to adhere to the following:

- Make reasonable and prudent parenting decisions regarding the day-to-day care of children placed under their care and oversight.
- Engage the child/youth's birth parents in decision making regarding the types of activities they desire the child to participate
- Notify DFCS/CPA prior to the occurrence of a child in DFCS custody participating in overnight trips exceeding two nights
- Provide a summary of the activities the child has participated in to the child's assigned case manager at each visit.

Attestation:

By signing below, you are acknowledging that the agency/department representative has reviewed the safety information with you and that you agree to follow the expectations as discussed.

Primary Caregiver Signature: Date:

Secondary Caregiver Signature: Date:

Agency/Department Representative Signature: Date:



Routine Substitute Caregivers

This form is used to document **Routine Substitute Caregivers**. *Routine Substitute Caregivers providing in home or out of home care are not reimbursed by the Division.* The foster parent provides or arranges for care and supervision appropriate to the child's age, level of development and individual needs. A plan is established by the foster parent for the care and supervision of the child, as needed, by a *competent and reliable adult* in their absence due to *employment, training, or for personal situations*.

Foster Parent Name: _____ County: _____

Substitute Caregiver (SC) Name: _____

SC Address: _____ SC Zip Code: _____

SC Phone Number: _____ SC Cell Number: _____

SC Maiden or Previously Used Name: _____

Case Manager: _____

Review Form 29, DFCS Safety Agreement and any additional supervision, safety and discipline guidelines with the substitute caregiver. Ensure that two copies are signed. (Copy 1 to the SC; Copy 2 to DFCS Case Manager)

Completed by the Substitute Caregiver:

Sign below to indicate your agreement to follow the supervision, safety and discipline standards as outlined in Form 29 and as instructed by the foster parent.

I agree to follow the supervision, safety and discipline standards as outlined in DFCS Form 29 and instructed by the foster parent.

*I do **not** agree to follow the supervision, safety and discipline standards as outlined in DFCS Form 29 and instructed by the foster parent. Therefore, I understand that I cannot be a substitute caregiver.*

Substitute Caregiver Signature

Date

Forward completed form and 1 signed copy of Form 29 to the case manager who will complete the CPS, Sexual Offender's, Pardons and Parole and Department of Corrections screenings.

Internal DFCS Use Only:

CPS Screening Completed

Sexual Offender's Registry Screening Completed

Department of Corrections Screening Completed

Pardons and Parole Screening Completed

Georgia Criminal History Screening (GCIC)/ Or letter from DECAL affirming screening within last 12 months

All screenings are negative for the unreimbursed substitute caregiver listed above.

Other _____

Completed by: _____ Date: _____



DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES

ROUTINE SUBSTITUTE CAREGIVERS (INSTRUCTIONS)

This Routine Substitute Caregivers form *is used to document **Routine Substitute Caregivers***. The foster parent provides or arranges for care and supervision appropriate to the child's age, level of development and individual needs. A plan is established by the foster parent for the care and supervision of the child, as needed, by a *competent and reliable adult* in their absence due to *employment, training, or for personal situations*.

- Substitute caregivers providing **occasional**, short-term, in-home/out-of-home childcare are not required to undergo CPS screenings. Occasional substitute caregivers are those providing care once a week, or less at varying days/times.
- Substitute caregivers providing **routine** in-home/out-of-home childcare **are required** to complete the form and submit to CPS screenings, Offender's Registry, Pardons and Parole, Department of Corrections, and State criminal history (GCIC) screening prior to providing care for the child.

Section I.

Complete the requested information for the foster parent, case manager and routine substitute caregiver.

Section II.

Provide the routine substitute caregiver with two copies of the Caregiver Child Safety Agreement. Review Caregiver Child Safety Agreement with the substitute caregiver and provide any additional supervision, safety and discipline instructions, which may be required.

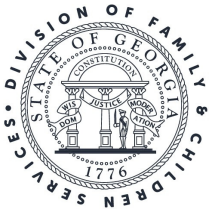
The routine substitute caregiver must sign/initial both copies of the Caregiver Child Safety Agreement and check the appropriate box, and sign and date the Routine Substitute Caregivers form. The routine substitute caregiver must also complete the Form 404 Criminal History Consent form so that a Georgia Criminal Records Check (CRC) can be completed.

The routine substitute caregiver should retain one signed copy of the Caregiver Child Safety Agreement. The other copy of Caregiver Child Safety Agreement is attached to the form Routine Substitute Caregivers, along with the Form 404 and forwarded to the case manager.

The Caregiver Child Safety Agreement should also be reviewed with occasional substitute caregivers.

The case manager will accomplish the following safety checks/screenings: Child Protective Services, Department of Corrections, Sexual Offender's Registry, Pardons and Parole, and State Criminal History (GCIC) screening*. A copy of the form will be forwarded back to the foster parent indicating, "all screenings were negative" or if any disqualifying findings were found.

***NOTE:** A letter from Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) issued within the previous 12 months stating that the substitute caregiver has received a satisfactory criminal records check determination may be accepted in lieu of a new criminal records check.



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Division of Family and Children Services

Consent for Criminal History Records Check

_____ County Department of Family and Children Services

I hereby authorize the above named county Department of Family and Children Services to access any criminal history record pertaining to me, which may be in the files of any local, state, or national criminal justice agency that can be lawfully accessed by a non-criminal justice agency in Georgia.

I, _____, I give consent to periodic criminal history background checks for the duration of my involvement with the Department of Human Services. This authorization is valid for 90/180/_____ (**circle one**) days from date of signature.

Signature Date

Last Name First Name Middle Name Maiden Name

Current Address

City County State Zip

Gender Race DOB Social Security Number

Height Weight Eye Color Hair Color

Place of Birth (City, State, Country)

For DHS Office of Inspector General use only:

- Employment with children (Purpose Code "W")
- Other non-criminal justice purposes (Purpose Code "E")
- Employment with mentally disabled (Purpose Code "M")
- Employment with elder care (Purpose Code "N")

DFCS REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Name Tel. Number Fax Number Email address

**When considering Reasonable
and Prudent Parenting Decisions
for Youth in Care Be Aware of
the Following Stages of
Adolescent Development**

Stages of Adolescence	Physical Development	Cognitive Development	Social-Emotional Development
<p style="text-align: center;">Early Adolescence</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Approximately 11 – 13 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty: grow body hair, increase perspiration and oil production in hair and skin, Girls – breast and hip development, onset of menstruation Boys – growth in testicles and penis, wet dreams, deepening of voice • Tremendous physical growth: gain height and weight • Greater sexual interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing capacity for abstract thought • Mostly interested in present with limited thought to the future • Intellectual interests expand and become more important • Deeper moral thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggle with sense of identity • Feel awkward about one’s self and one’s body; worry about being normal • Realize that parents are not perfect; increased conflict with parents • Increased influence of peer group • Desire for independence • Tendency to return to “childish” behavior, particularly when stressed • Moodiness • Rule- and limit-testing • Greater interest in privacy
<p style="text-align: center;">Middle Adolescence</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Approximately 14 – 18 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Puberty is completed • Physical growth slows for girls, continues for boys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued growth of capacity for abstract thought • Greater capacity for setting goals • Interest in moral reasoning • Thinking about the meaning of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intense self-involvement, changing between high expectations and poor self-concept • Continued adjustment to changing body, worries about being normal • Tendency to distance selves from parents, continued drive for independence • Driven to make friends and greater reliance on them, popularity can be an important issue • Feelings of love and passion

<p>Late Adolescence</p> <p>Approximately 19 – 21 years of age</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young women, typically, are fully developed • Young men continue to gain height, weight, muscle mass, and body hair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to think ideas through • Ability to delay gratification • Examination of inner experiences • Increased concern for future • Continued interest in moral reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firmer sense of identity • Increased emotional stability • Increased concern for others • Increased independence and self-reliance • Peer relationships remain important • Development of more serious relationships • Social and cultural traditions regain some of their importance
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Adapted from the American Academy of Child and Adolescent's Facts for Families. © All rights reserved. 2008

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
Rights of Youth in Foster Care

1. I have the right to fair and equitable treatment by the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), foster parents, and other partners in the care of children in foster care;
2. I have the right to information regarding my heritage and cultural background;
3. I have the right to be safe from abuse, neglect and exploitation;
4. I have the right to know why I am in the child welfare system;
5. I have the right to have my educational needs met;
6. I have the right to have my health needs met;
7. I have the right to family and community connections, including visitation, telephone calls, etc.¹;
8. I have the right to have regular, ongoing opportunities to engage in age or developmentally appropriate activities as defined in O.C.G.A. Section 49-5-3;
9. I have the right to have intensive, ongoing efforts made to reunify me with my birth family (i.e. parents or relatives) or to secure a safe, permanent home;
10. I have the right to participate in the development of the case plan and to review sign, and receive a copy of the case plan²;
11. I have the right to choose up to two members of the case planning team who are neither my foster parent nor caseworker³;
12. I have the right to participate in Juvenile court proceedings regarding my family;
13. I have the right to receive the services needed to help me transition to adulthood;
14. I have the right to receive a free copy of my consumer credit report;
15. I have the right to receive an official or certified United States birth certificate, Social Security card, driver's license or identification card, health insurance information, and medical records upon exiting foster care at age 18 or above⁴; and
16. I have the right to receive an age appropriate description of my rights and a personal copy.
17. I have the right to have a personal advocate to support me through the grievance process.

Responsibilities of Youth in Foster Care

1. I have the responsibility to treat myself and others with dignity and respect.
2. I am responsible for my own choices, decisions, actions and behaviors.
3. I have the responsibility to try to learn from my mistakes so I can make positive choices in my life.
4. I have the responsibility to try to the best of my ability in school, to take full advantage of educational opportunities and achieve my educational goals.
5. I have the responsibility to cooperate with services recommended to meet my health needs.
6. I have the responsibility to set and keep safe boundaries with family members, friends, acquaintances, and others with whom I maintain connections.
7. I have the responsibility to do my best to communicate openly with others when I have a problem.
8. I have the responsibility to ask for help when I need it, even when I have trouble asking for help.
9. I am responsible for making amends if my actions harm others.
10. I am responsible for making every effort not to cause harm to myself or others and to speak up when I feel my rights have been violated.

¹ Unless the court determines unsupervised visitation is not in the child's best interest (O.C.G.A 15-11-112)

² One member of the case planning team may be designated to be the youth's advisor/advocate, with respect to the application of the reasonable and prudent parent standard to the youth.

³ DFCS may reject an individual selected by a youth if it has good cause to believe that individual would not act in the youth's best interest.

⁴ This right applies only to youth who have been in foster care for at least six months prior to their exit.

**Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
Youth Rights Grievance Form**

Youth Name:

County: Region:

Youth Email:

Youth Contact Number:

Youth Placement:

DFCS Case Manager:

STEP ONE Grievance STEP TWO Grievance

What right do you feel has been violated? Please explain what happened.

What have you done to resolve this situation/concern prior to filing a STEP ONE of Youth Rights Grievance?

How would you like this situation/concern to be resolved?

Please provide contact information for any person who was involved including youth advocate.

Name

Phone Number

Relationship (to youth)

Date Submitted:

**Georgia Division of Family and Children Services
RPPS and YRs Practice Change Action Plan**

What's one personal paradigm (thinking/acting) shift that you need to make in order to support RPPS?			
What's one personal paradigm (thinking/acting) shift that you need to make in order to support YRs?			
Write your personal practice change plan.			
List the people/groups that you need to share the RPPS and YRs information with?	When will you share the information?	What issue might they have/encounter?	How will you address the issue?

Caregiver Guideline for Reasonable and Prudent Parenting (RPPS)

*The RPPS standard characterized is by **careful and sensible** parental decisions that **maintain the health, safety, and best interests of a child** while at the same time **encouraging the emotional and developmental** growth of the child, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of the State to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.*

Activity Category	GREEN-RPPS APPLIES —Caregiver may make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision without consulting in advance with the agency.	RED—RPPS DOES NOT APPLY. Caregiver must contact the agency for approval / consultation.
Family Recreation	Movies, Community Events, Hiking, Camping, Swimming	Any overnight event that will exceed to two consecutive nights
Occasional, non-routine caregiving	Babysitting, adult assistance with transportation to appointments, picking up child from school, occasional visits with other adults approved by the foster family	Any routine caregiving occurring at set designated days/times must meet routine caregiving requirements
Social/Extracurricular	Camps, field trips, school related activities, church activities, youth organizations, sports, social activities with peers.	Any overnight event that will exceed to two consecutive nights
Overnights	Ok for up to two consecutive nights	Any overnight event that will exceed to two consecutive nights.
Leaving Youth Unsupervised	May approve youth age 14 years and older to be unsupervised for reasonable amounts of time. Unsupervised time should be decided based on age, current behavior, history, and ability.	Youth under age 14 years of age may not be left unsupervised.

Motorized Activities	Must follow the DFCS policy on motor vehicle and bicycle safety.	DFCS and CPAs shall ensure all approved caregivers comply with the following safety guidelines regarding motor vehicles: a) Caregivers are required to transport every child under eight years of age in a federally approved child safety seat that is
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Activity Category	GREEN-RPPS APPLIES —Caregiver may make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision without consulting in advance with the agency.	RED—RPPS DOES NOT APPLY. Caregiver must contact the agency for approval / consultation.
		<p>used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Caregivers are required to transport children 12 years and under in the rear seat of the vehicle, with seat belts buckled up to protect young children from air bag injuries. c) Caregivers are prohibited from allowing children and youth under the age of 18 to ride in the bed of a pickup truck. The County Director/Designee may provide waivers when children wish to participate in parades, hayrides, and similar events. d) Prior to allowing a child to operate a motor vehicle, caregivers must contact the child's SSCM and comply with all agency policy regarding the driving of motor vehicles by youth in placement. e) All children in care, regardless of age, must be individually secured (one child to a seat belt) by an appropriately fitting seat belt when being transported in a motorized vehicle. f) Caregivers must never leave children under the age of 12 years or children who are medically, emotionally, psychologically, or behaviorally challenged unattended in motor vehicles. g) Caregivers must provide a properly fitted and securely fastened safety helmet for any child who is operating a bicycle or riding as a passenger on a bicycle on a road, bicycle path, or sidewalk.

Activity Category	GREEN-RPPS APPLIES —Caregiver may make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision without consulting in advance with the agency.	RED—RPPS DOES NOT APPLY. Caregiver must contact the agency for approval / consultation.
		h) Helmets are required for children when operating or riding as a passenger on other types of vehicles (excluding an automobile), such as all-terrain vehicles, motorbikes, small motor craft, etc.
BB Guns , Hunting Rifles	Provide reasonable and prudent supervision of children playing with toys that have the potential to cause in personal injury or injury to others (e.g., BB guns, air guns, sling shots, bows and arrows, etc.). Such toys come with warnings and age restrictions that need to be followed to ensure proper safety precautions are taken. Caregivers may make reasonable and prudent decisions regarding youth's participation in thrill ride activities such as bungee jumping or roller coasters.	Under limited circumstances, particular children may be allowed to handle firearms. Youth ages 13 years and older who have successfully complied with all applicable hunting license requirements for Georgia, may engage in hunting activities while under the direct supervision of the caregiver or other approved adult. The caregiver/ approved adult is also required to be in compliance with Georgia hunting license requirements. Georgia requires completion of a hunter education course (including safety guidelines) for all persons born after January 1, 1961. The County Director/Designee must give prior approval , taking under consideration the psychological and emotional capacity of the child as well as any developmental or behavioral needs. If parental rights have not been terminated, prior written approval must be obtained from the birth parent.
Driving	May authorize youth to take drivers education or teach youth to drive. See ILP Policy Chapter 13.8	Once licensed, the youth may not operate a vehicle for which they are not covered under the insurance policy.

Activity Category	GREEN-RPPS APPLIES —Caregiver may make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision without consulting in advance with the agency.	RED—RPPS DOES NOT APPLY. Caregiver must contact the agency for approval / consultation.
Youth Employment	May authorize the youth to work based on Georgia’s youth employment law http://www.dol.state.ga.us/pdf/rules/child_labor_laws_and_rules.pdf	
Religious Participation	May attend church services if not in conflict with child or parent’s beliefs.	Participation in religious ceremonies such as baptism or confirmations require the approval of the birth parent.
All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV)	Extra caution must be exercised when allowing a child less than 18 year of age to operate or ride as a passenger on a motorcycle, a motorbike, an all-terrain vehicle (ATV), a high- speed water craft, or other similarly motorized vehicles. These high-speed vehicles can be particularly challenging to operate; therefore, reasonable care and caution should be applied when considering a child’s participation in such activities. Permission from the agency/department must be obtained prior to allowing a child to ride as a passenger or driver of an ATV.	
Animal Safety	Children are the primary victims of dog bites. Dogs with which the child is familiar usually inflict such bites. In the absence of substantive dog safety laws in Georgia, caregivers must take reasonable safety precautions when children are around pets. Serious consideration should be given to the type/breed of pets and their history of violence or aggressiveness toward people when assessing safety factors in the foster home.	The agency must discuss any issues or concerns related to any pet (type, size, quantity, etc.) should be thoroughly discussed and documented during the assessment and re-evaluation process.
Personal Firearms	Caregivers must never allow children in care to handle any type firearm (see BB Gun/Hunting rifle exception above).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All firearms in the home must be kept under lock and key and inaccessible to children at all times. As an added safety measure, any commercially available, reliable gun- safety mechanisms (e.g., trigger guard lock.) may also be used. (See Foster Parent Manual for a list of the types of gun safety devices that may be used.) 2. All ammunition should be locked away and stored in a separate location from firearms in the home.

Activity Category	GREEN-RPPS APPLIES —Caregiver may make a reasonable and prudent parenting decision without consulting in advance with the agency.	RED—RPPS DOES NOT APPLY. Caregiver must contact the agency for approval / consultation.
		3. Keys to locked storage devices are to be kept in the possession of an adult or reasonably secured from children.
Medication	May not make changes to prescribed regiments/doctors' orders. Caregivers may administer over the counter (OTC) medications as appropriate, in consideration of any know allergies and possible interactions with other medications and ensuring that OTC drugs are used as directed.	1. All medication prescribed to children in foster care shall be administered only as directed by the prescribing physician, administered only by authorized adults, and stored and transported in the original containers.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The FAQs will be continually updated as needed and available at www.fostergeorgia.com and at www.gascore.com “revised by dates” will be changed as the document is updated to indicate that additional FAQs have been added. To add a question, please email the Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit at CRRU@dhs.ga.gov.

1. Why are we doing this?

*The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act includes more than prevention. It also requires states to provide youth in foster care a **list of their rights**, as well as opportunities to **participate in their case plan**. Furthermore, this bill addresses long term foster care by exploring more options for older youth in care instead of resorting to **permanent foster care**. This bill additionally focuses on opportunities to provide more **normalcy** for youth in care by reducing the amount of red tape a young person faces when seeking to participate in school or community activities.*

2. Shouldn't we have been doing this all along?

Many foster families are currently supporting youth in the most “normal” ways possible. A lot of foster kids have great opportunities to try new things and be a part of community groups and clubs. However, there are limitations on the amount of time youth can be unsupervised or be in homes of their friends. The best example is youth not being able to go to sleepovers because of the background checks that need to be done. This new policy leaves the decisions about things like that to care givers.

3. What about liability?

Caregivers are immune from civil liability when approving children and youth to participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities and/or substitute care when the caregiver is acting in accord with the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standards.

4. Providers are often cited regarding lack of supervision. Will RCC and OPM be the judge of what is reasonable and prudent?

Both RCC and OPM staff are knowledgeable about the RPPS. All DFCS permanency and CPS are being trained in RPPS. Additionally, RPPS has been added to the DFCS Child Welfare Policy Manual and has been added to the FY2016 RBWO Minimum Standards (for private agencies). The Prudent Parenting Project Team/Workgroup will continue to review additional policies such as Corrective Action Plans and Policy Violations to determine if policies will need to be amended. Remember, each agency is required to complete a thorough initial assessment and continuous annual assessment of the foster parent. During these assessments, providers should be assessing the foster parent's caregiver's capacity. Providers are also required to provide training to the foster parent/caregiver to increase their caregiver capacity annually.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

5. We got a lot of specific questions all along the line of, what if a parent and a youth agree on something but their agency and or DFCS and/or their birth parent doesn't agree. How does that get resolved?

The foster parent/caregiver will be the primary day-to-day basis decision maker. However, the birth parent should be involved as much as practical in decision-making. Circumstances that can't be resolved with a parenting team (caregiver, birth parent, staff, youth) should be elevated to the next line of supervision within DFCS until a satisfactory resolution can be reached.

6. Who pays for "normal" activities?

No new specials funds have been made available. However, there are several ways to fund the children's normal activities.

- *Ask about any available county funds.*
- *For children under age 14 years, utilize Summer Safety/Enrichment Funds (UAS 521, code80)*
- *Afterschool Programs*
- *Youth who are over 14 years old and has been in custody of DFCS for over 6 months, and are ILP eligible, could seek funding through ILP. However, the information regarding the activity should be included in the child's Written Transitional Living Plan.*
- *Children who are in foster care typically have Amerigroup Medicaid. Amerigroup currently covers cost for after-school Boys and Girls Club and Girl Scouts. Foster parents would need to contact Amerigroup to access these services.*
- *Foster parents/caregivers are encouraged to seek no or low-cost community-based activities as well.*

7. What role will the Graduated Independence Plan (GIP) policy play in all of this?

DFCS will be making changes to several policies that would affect a foster parents/caregiver's ability to exercise prudent parenting. As of now, DFCS would encourage the use of the graduated independence plan as a tool to communicate with the youth regarding the agency's expectation of him/her as the provider continues to grant the child's means to gain independence. A written GIP however is no longer required though its use is still recommended.

8. How are we going to ensure that ALL youth have access to these opportunities?

The law requires that DFCS ensure that youth have access to age and developmentally appropriate activities. During ECEM contacts, DFCS and RBWO providers should include this in their assessments. Staff should ask children questions regarding their activities. For private providers, OPM will continue to assess this during their monitoring visits for comprehensive and safety reviews.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

9. Children and youth in foster care MAY NOT ride with other teens, their coaches, etc., right?

They may ride with other people including other teens with the permission of their caregivers. Caregivers must have knowledge of the current teen driving laws and decision is subject to the legal restrictions regarding teen drivers and the number of teen passengers they are permitted to have. A list of Frequently Asked Questions for Teen Driving Laws is located at <http://www.dds.ga.gov/faqs/index.aspx?faqcategoryid=42>.

10. Children and youth in foster care MAY NOT ride ATV's and other equipment, right?

The youth may ride ATV's and other equipment if they practice safe measures such as wearing helmets with permission from the caregiver(s) and the agency/Division. Please see the Caregiver Guidelines Chart.

11. Children and youth in foster care MAY NOT participate community activities unless background screenings have occurred, right?

Background screenings are not a requirement for participation in community activities. The youth may participate with the permission of their caregiver(s).

12. Children and youth in foster care MAY NOT travel with their foster parents out of country or out of state, right?

The children and youth in foster care may travel out of country and/or state, however, this will require advance approval from DFCS and the Juvenile Court (for out of country travel).

13. Children and youth in foster care MAY NOT spend the night at a friend's house without screenings and approvals from DFCS?

It is not required for the friend's parents to receive screenings for overnight visits. The youth may participate with the permission of their caregiver (s). Please see the Babysitting & Overnight Guidelines handout.

14. Who can be considered a "substitute caregiver"?

Please see the Substitute Caregiver & Overnights Guidelines handout for the key requirements.

15. Do non-reimbursed Substitute Caretakers have to have ACCURINT searches completed and out- of-state CPS checks conducted if they have lived out of state previously?

No, Accurint checks nor out of state CPS checks apply to substitute caregivers unless the person becomes a routine caregiver. Please see the Substitute Caregiver & Overnights Guidelines handout for key requirements.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

16. Who will be responsible for the foster parent reviewing the DFCS disciplinary policy with a substitute caregiver?

The foster parent will be responsible for reviewing the discipline policy with the substitute caregiver. Please see the Substitute & Overnight Guidelines handout for key requirements.

17. How much information should a caregiver share with substitute caregiver?

The caregiver is able to share enough information to ensure that the substitute caregiver will be able to care for the child. This does not require discussing personal information regarding family/child's case.

18. Do non-reimbursed Substitute Caregivers and adults that are hosting our foster children in their homes for overnight sleepovers have to sign a copy of the Form 29 (Safety Agreement)?

It is not required for a substitute caregiver to sign a Safety Agreement, but it is encouraged that they be provided a copy. However, the caregiver should make sure that the substitute caregiver/babysitter is prepared and able to meet the needs of the children placed in their temporary care, explained the DFCS discipline policy, and provided with behavior management instructions. Please see the Substitute Caregiver & Overnight Guidelines handout.

19. Is every individual in the parenting role required to participate in IMPACT Training?

IMPACT is for individuals who are going to serve as the primary or secondary caregiver for the foster children. It is not required that Substitute Caregivers (whether routine or occasional) receive IMPACT training. Please see the Substitute Caregiver & Overnight Guidelines handout for the key requirements.

20. Are foster parents allowed to be “substitute caregivers” for foster youth from a different agency? (Ex. foster parent from Agency 1 provide care for a foster child from Agency 2, the foster parents maybe friends/relatives, however foster through different agencies.)

Yes, they can. The reasonable and prudent parenting standard empowers the foster parents to make day-to-day decision-making for children placed in their home. The foster parent will have the ability to leave the child with an alternative/substitute caregiver (friends or relatives) even if that friend is a foster parent. Keep in mind though that an active foster parent must continue to meet the DFCS Safety and Quality Standards at all times, which includes foster home utilization standards. If the number of children sleeping over will violate the SQS in anyway, it is reasonable and prudent to check with your agency in advance.

*Substitute Caregiving (ie, babysitting) **is not to be confused with paid respite**, however. To use a foster parent friend for respite, the foster parents will have to communicate and coordinate this through their agencies as usual.*

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

21. Can non-reimbursed substitute caregivers babysit foster children in their own homes as opposed to the home of the foster parents?

The caregiver should make a reasonable and prudent decision regarding where the babysitting should take place. One of the requirements is for the substitute caregiver to be able to meet the needs of children placed in their temporary care. An average parent would make sure to at least visit the substitute caregiver's home to determine whether it is an appropriate environment.

22. Who can serve as a caregiver for Child Care Institutions (CCIs)?

Caregivers at CCIs or group homes must be in the role of Human Services Professional or higher, at least 25 years of age or 10 years older than the youth for whom the decision is being made.

23. Will caregivers be responsible if a youth cuts hair, pierced body part, etc. while at a friend's home?

There is a difference between "responsible" and "liable". The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act provides liability cover for caregivers when children are injured while participating in an approved activity (in this case the activity is having been given permission to visit a friend). The youth is responsible for the actions described in the question not the caregiver.

24. Can children 14 years of age and older be left under their own supervision for short periods of time with other children present, i.e. friends, foster parent's younger children and/or other foster children 14 years and older?

*Children 14 years of age and older may be left under their **own supervision** for short periods of time. Foster parents/Caregivers should use the good judgment and assess the children's acuity mix when deciding to leave children unattended for short periods of time. Children in DFCS custody may not be left under the supervision of other minors (see DFCS Child Welfare Policy 14.18 Supervision of Children).*

25. What are non-negotiables?

Non-negotiables are situations where the caregiver cannot make sole decisions for foster children. These decisions must be made by the biological or removal family and/or DFCS. The following is a list of non-negotiables:

- *Court Ordered Visitation/General*
- *Medical Approvals-other*
- *Return children without court approval*
- *Disciplinary Policy*

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and
Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting
Standards Frequently Asked
Questions (FAQs)

- *Changing Schools*
- *ILP*
- *Drastic changes of child's appearance*
- *Medications*

26. Are Child Placing Agencies allowed to add further approvals or restrictions to the approval criteria set out by the State?

No. Neither state nor CPAs may create rules/standards which are a barrier to execution of RPPS.

27. Can foster parent(s)/caregiver(s) consent for a youth to obtain a driver's license?

O.C.G.A Section 40-5-26(a)(1) states that the parent or guardian must give permission. The caregiver is not considered to be the parent or the guardian of the child, therefore, cannot consent for the youth to obtain a driver's license.

28. Is there a restriction on how often a child/youth can go to sleepovers?

*There is no cumulative total for sleepovers. The sleepover cannot exceed two (2) consecutive nights without notifying DFCS. **Sleep-overs do not equate to babysitting, rather they are for the purpose of child interaction with peers.***

29. Is there a restriction on age of a child/youth that can go to sleepovers?

There is no age restriction on when a youth can attend a sleep-over. However, it is recommended that caregiver utilized the "Know" Before You Say "No" handout to assist with making reasonable and prudent parenting decisions.

30. How will the youth be informed regarding the Youth Rights and Responsibilities?

The Georgia ILP will be hosting Youth Rights and Responsibilities Workshops around the state in Fall 2015. All youth are being encouraged to participate in this workshop and will sign an acknowledgment form that states that they have received the information. It is also important for the DFCS case manager to continue to review the information with youth to ensure all youth understand their rights and responsibilities.

31. What email address should the youth use in order to file grievances?

Youth can file a grievance by sending an email to the Erika Dennis at Erika.Dennis@dhs.ga.gov or askILP@dhs.ga.gov until the Georgia ILP site is available.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

32. My college aged sister (who needs pocket money) comes over to our house when we go to our small group each week and we pay her just to help her out. Is she a routine caregiver after the 3rd time she does that?

All routine caregivers regardless of relationship are subject to the screening requirement. If caregiving becomes routine, at designated dates/times, routine caregiving requirements apply.

33. The spirit of RPP seems to fit best with “get that person approved before the 4th instance” for caregivers who have little or no pre-existing relationship with the family.

This applies, only if the person providing care (substitute caregiver” will continue to do so routinely for designated days/times.

34. The rules for children to be away from home overnight seem far more permissive than day/evening. There is no restriction or approval for families who do overnights on multiple occasions. The restrictions are only based on consecutive nights, correct?

Correct. Foster parents must make reasonable and prudent decisions regarding overnights. Since these are not for the purpose of arranging for routine childcare but rather supporting the friendships between children, the screening requirement does not apply.

35. If I do not have a long-standing relationship with someone, how does RPPS apply?

Foster parents need to have confidence that any person they choose to provide care for their children are capable of meeting the child/ren’s needs. Therefore, the foster parent must have confidence in any potential caretaker before applying RPPS.

36. The term “babysitter” and “routine caregiver” are both creating confusing signals on who needs to be approved.

A babysitter is either a “routine” or “occasional” caregiver. It depends on how often the particular babysitter is used. We use the terms “substitute caregiver, routine/occasional caregivers and unreimbursed caregiver” to help distinguish categories of caregiving. For example, to distinguish between state paid child care (licensed daycare, CAPS) and informal foster parent arranged, non-state paid child care (i.e. Babysitter).

Please see the chart below for key distinguishing features of babysitters, routine caregivers, occasional caregivers and playmate’s parents.

	Babysitter	Routine Caregiver	Occasional Caregiver	Parent of Child’s Playmate
Description	Provides foster parent arranged watchful oversight of children; A babysitter is a routine or occasional caregiver.	Provides foster parent arranged watchful oversight of children. Routine care means care provided more than once a week, usually at designated times.	Provides foster parent arranged watchful oversight of children. Occasional care means care provided once a week or less.	Parent of the foster child’s friend; caregiving occurs in the course of the children being friends and desiring to spend time together.

Payment	May or may not be paid by the foster parent	May or may not be paid by the foster parent	May or may not be paid by the foster parent	None; the children are playing together or having a sleep-over.
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Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
 Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Relationship to Foster Parent	May or may not be a related to the foster parent	May or may not be a related to the foster parent	May or may not be a related to the foster parent	If related to the foster parent, then the occasional/routine policy prevails and applies.
Foster Grandparents & Other Relatives (The parents and relatives of the foster parent)	Determine if the person will be providing routine or occasional care. Routine Caregivers must complete the Unreimbursed Routine Substitute In-Home/Out of Home Caregiver Form and satisfactorily complete required safety and criminal history screenings.	Unreimbursed Routine Substitute In-Home/Out of Home Caregiver Form and satisfactorily complete required safety and criminal history screenings. (see policy 14.18).	Occasional Caregivers are not required to undergo safety screenings, unless they become a routine caregiver – then the screening requirement applies.	If related to the foster parent, then the occasional/routine policy prevails and applies.
When Should They Be Screened	When it is determined that they babysitter will be providing routine care (more than once/week at designated times).	Prior to them providing the routine care.	When it is determined that they are a routine caregiver.	N/A unless they are relatives of the foster parent.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

37. At what point does someone in the foster family's natural network become subject to approvals if all they are doing is being a friend of the family or child in the natural course of life?

Unless they are serving as a routine caregiver, they are not subject to screenings assuming of course that they do not live in the foster parent's household.

38. If they are a part of the family's natural network does the fact that I decide to pay them something have any bearing on their need to get approved?

All routine caregivers regardless of payment arrangements are subject to the screening requirement.

39. My neighbor has my kids over after school to play with her kids several times a week. I host all the kids at my house on the other days. Is she ever subject to needing approval?

No, the caregiving that occurs in the course of the children being friends and desiring to spend time together does not subject the parent to screenings. Please see the chart in Q35.

40. Foster families are no longer required to ask their agency about sleepovers that do not exceed 2 nights. As a result, how will the agency meet its requirement of "always knowing where the child is" or has that expectation been softened in the development of the new policy?

There is not a policy that states that DFCS has to know (physically) where children are at all times. This is not reasonable or practicable for even intact families. DFCS must know at all times where children are placed and where they are for paid respite. The caregivers with whom children are placed are entrusted with knowing where children in their care are (physically).

41. What documentation will be required by a foster parent or CCI designee to satisfy the standard of a prudent parent decision that results in harm or other potential legal situations?

No documentation is required other than the caregiver keeping general notes about what activities the child took part in.

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

42. How do CPAs and CCIs minimize the chance of receiving RCCL citation for lack of supervision? *Note: This response is provided by RCCL.*

By ensuring that the caregiver has been provided with a complete history of the child, a current service plan for the child, and training on the facilities'/agencies' prudent parenting policies and procedures and using that information along with the caregivers' direct parental experiences with the child whenever making reasonable prudent parenting decisions. Both direct care staff (including foster parents) and administrative staff have a role in ensuring that decisions regarding supervision of children are both prudent and reasonable. Additional details on each of the four components of Prudent Parenting Decision Making are provided below:

- 1) **Referral/Intake**- The provider should ensure that the referral source has provided them with a complete history (to the extent known) regarding: the child's needs; previous disruptions and cause of those disruptions; triggers and precautions; behavioral concerns; and academic attendance and performance. That information should in turn be passed on to the caregiver upon placement or as soon as it becomes available and utilized as part of the reasonable and prudent parenting decision-making process. The receipt and provision of this information to the caregiver should be documented in the file.
- 2) **Service Plans**-The provider should ensure that service plans are kept current and are based on a comprehensive written assessment. The plans should provide the caregiver with guidelines on recommended levels of supervision based on both historical and current functioning, needs, and behaviors of the child. The completed plans and provision of this information to the caregiver should be documented in the file. Information obtained through supervision of the placement should be utilized to revise the plan as "changes to functioning, needs, behaviors, and recommended levels of supervision occur" so it can be more specific..."as needed" seems to subjective).
- 3) **Facility Policies and Procedures**-each facility/agency should have clear policies and procedures related to the implementation of Reasonable Prudent Parenting (RPP) and should include guidelines to caregivers such as increased supervision during the first 30 days of placement and when the referral/Intake information or current behaviors warrant. All caregivers should be trained on those policies and procedures.
- 4) **Caregiver's Judgment**-Each caregiver should consider numbers 1-3 above along with their own parental experiences with the child and the child's current behaviors and needs in order to make reasonable Prudent Parenting decisions. Changes in behaviors, functioning, and needs of the child should be discussed regularly with the provider, but at a minimum during monthly supervision and documented in the file.

43. Can staff take residents off-campus or away from foster home for an overnight trip?

If the agency (CPA or CCI) has coordinated or are participating in an overnight activity such as conferences or vacations, it is appropriate for staff also be present on those outings. However, staff are not allowed to take foster children on private overnight activities or private staffs' family and friends outings.

Georgia Division of Family & Children Services
Placement and Permanency Services / Caregiver Recruitment and Retention Unit

Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

44. Can a CCI reduce their insurance after RPPS has been implemented?

No. CCIs are still required to maintain the same amount of insurance coverage prior to implementation of RPPS. Please review Para #129 Insurance in your agency's most recent contract regarding coverage for worker's compensation, commercial general liability, business auto, malpractice/professional liability, and commercial umbrella policies.

45. How are agencies supposed to handle situations/issues when children believe that they are being treated "unfairly"?

RBWO Minimum Standards requires that agencies provide the youth with an orientation and a handbook when the youth is admitted to the program. The children should have a clear understanding of the agency's behavior management and grievance policies. The agency is responsible for amending their own policies. Amended policies must be sent to OPM for review and approval. If a youth right has been violated and cannot be resolved through the agency's grievance process, youth (14 years old and older) can elect to file a formal grievance with the Division. Please see the DFCS Child Welfare Policy 13.7 Youth Rights and Responsibilities).

46. What support would a CCI receive from OPM/RCC if a child is injured off campus after a RPPS decision has been made?

Providers will continue their incident reporting processes for OPM, RCC, and CPS. Each case would have to be considered individually.

47. Can CCIs utilize babysitters/volunteers to care for children for a short period of time (ex. date night for houseparent?)

No. According to the RBWO Minimum Standards, CCI must comply with all applicable rules and regulations of RCC (13.20) and must employ an adequate number of qualified staff to provide the necessary supervision services (13.9). Staffing ratios must meet the minimum standards as outlined in the Staffing Section of the RBWO Minimum Stands (13.13).