

# *Normalcy Matters*



**TEXASCASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
 **FOR CHILDREN**

*Presented by Texas CASA*

# AGENDA

- **Defining Normalcy**
- **Discuss why it is important**
- **Give Examples**
- **Discuss the role of CASA**



# Reflection Exercise

**Write down 3 of your favorite memories from childhood**

- **What were you doing?**
- **Who were you with?**



# What is Normalcy?

**Normalcy is legally defined as the ability of a child in care to live as normal a life as possible.**



# What is Normalcy?

**Normalcy means engaging in childhood activities that are suitable for children of the:**

- **Same age**
- **Same level of maturity**
- **Save developmental level**



# What is Normalcy?

**Normalcy also means having normal interactions and experiences within a foster family and participating in foster family activities.**



# What is Normalcy?

**Normalcy for kids in care means:**

- **Being treated as a person, not a “foster youth”**
- **Being allowed to try new things**
- **Having the freedom to make mistakes**



# Understanding the “Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard”

**The “Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard” is the standard that a parent of reasonable judgement, skill and caution would use to maintain the health, safety and best interest of the child and to encourage the emotional and social growth and development of the child.**





# Understanding the “Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard”

- **Allows caregivers to act as parents and make daily decisions about activities kids in their care can and want to do**
- **Caregivers do not need permission from caseworkers**



# Understanding the “Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard”

- **Background checks are NOT required for people a child might encounter or interact with during a normalcy activity**
- **Activities do not need to be listed in a child’s plan of service**



# Understanding the “Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard”

- **Protects caregivers and child placing agencies from liability for any injury or harm that may occur to a child during a normalcy activity**



# Why is Normalcy Important?

**Normalcy experiences help kids develop interests, acquire skills and build lasting, supporting relationships.**



# Why is Normalcy Important?

**Social activities have been shown to:**

- **Reduce defensiveness**
- **Enhance well-being**
- **Foster maturity**
- **Increase coping and problem solving skills**



# Why is Normalcy Important?

**Extracurricular activities are correlated with:**

- **Better GPA performance**
- **Reduced dropout rates**
- **Lower rates of substance use**
- **Reduced rates of delinquent behavior**



**Normalcy is a critical component in healthy social, emotional and cognitive development.**







# Critical Issues

## Activities, friendships and sports

- **Background checks and permission from caseworkers are not required**



# Critical Issues

## Allowance

- **Does not have to be money**
- **Helps teach skills and allows kids to gain responsibility**



# Critical Issues

## Cultural Identity and Support

- **Share acceptance and celebration of a child's race, culture and identity**
- **Ask them words they use and like to describe themselves**



# Critical Issues

## Educational Stability

- **School of origin**
- **School transitions**
- **Confidentiality**



# Critical Issues

## Employment

- **Interviewing**
- **Time & money management**
- **Responsibility & accountability**
- **Documents needed**



# Critical Issues

## Faith Community Participation

- **Can provide positive relationships and important connection to their culture of origin**



# Critical Issues

## Financial Literacy & Banking

- **Important in creating success after care**
- **Discuss credit cards and dangerous predatory lending**



# Critical Issues

## Medical Self-Advocacy

- **Medical consent at age 16 if granted by court**
- **Self-administration of medication**
- **Family planning**





# Critical Issues

## Travel

- **Permission required if the trip is longer than 72 hours or out of state**
- **International travel is allowed and encouraged**



# Critical Issues

## Unsupervised Activities

- **Strongly recommended**
- **Remember the reasonable and prudent parent standard**



# Critical Issues

## Congregate Care:

- **Address the physical space**
- **Allow youth to learn household skills**
- **Use a trauma-informed approach to care**



# Critical Issues

## Congregate Care:

- **Partnerships with the community**
- **School environment**
- **Cell phones, TV, food and group activities**



# CASA's Role

**Talk to kids frequently and directly about normalcy:**

- **What are their interests?**
- **What are they experiencing?**
- **Are their cultural and faith-based needs being met?**



# CASA's Role

**Talk to kids frequently and directly about normalcy:**

- **Can they be enrolled in activities that interest them?**
- **What barriers to normalcy do they have?**



# CASA's Role

- **Gain a basic understanding of the resources in your community that support normalcy**
- **Encourage children and youth to speak for themselves, especially in court**



# CASA's Role

- **Make sure the child or youth knows about their rights in foster care**
- **Talk to their caregiver about the caregiver's needs**





# CASA's Role


**Ensure that you are thoughtful about your role in creating barriers to normalcy and talk intentionally to everyone on the team about this**




<https://texascasa.org/resources/normalcy-matters-guide/>



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TEXASCASA  
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# NORMALCY MATTERS

**A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care**

**QUESTIONS?**



# THANK YOU

Contact us for more information:  
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