

Letting Kids BE KIDS

Promoting the **well-being** and **normalcy of youth in foster care** through the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (SFA)

WHAT?

Signed into law by President Obama in September 2014, the Strengthening Families Act is designed to promote the well-being and normalcy of youth in foster care. The law establishes the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard (RPPS) to guide and give foster parents, caregivers, and congregate care providers more decision making authority about daily, age-appropriate activities for youth in their care.

WHO?

The SFA impacts children and youth in foster care, foster parents, caregivers, group care providers, adult allies, child welfare agencies, and the juvenile courts.

WHY?

The engagement of young people, despite their circumstances, in age and developmentally appropriate experiences is critical in their transition into strong and independent adults.

System Barriers:

Prior to SFA, policies and practices of child welfare systems were based on three priorities- the safety, well-being, and permanency of children and youth. As a result, Child Welfare agencies often unintentionally limited youth development and well-being by focusing primarily on safety. Restricting a child's engagement in activities and normalcy-related experiences limited agency risk and liability.¹

The Benefits Outweigh the Risks:

Youth report feeling "different" when they are restricted from participating in typical activities of their peers who are not in foster care. Many also report feeling excluded from experiences that are considered milestones in youth development including:



OBTAINING
A DRIVERS
LICENSE



WORKING AN
AFTER SCHOOL
JOB



ATTENDING
PROM



HAVING A CELL
PHONE OR USING
INTERNET



PRACTICING IMPORTANT
LIFE SKILLS SUCH AS
COOKING, DOING LAUNDRY,
& MANAGING MONEY
THROUGH A
BANK ACCOUNT



HAVING
SLEEP OVERS &
HANGING OUT
WITH FRIENDS



PARTICIPATING
IN SPORTS OR
EXTRACURRICULAR
ACTIVITIES

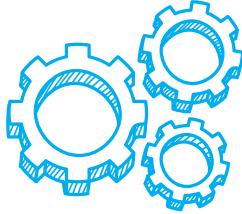
¹ Juvenile Law Center, promoting Normalcy for Children and Youth in Foster Care. More information can be found at www.JLC.org

What Does “Normalcy” Mean for Youth, Foster Parents & Caregivers ?

To promote and ensure normalcy, the SFA gives foster parents, caregivers, and group care providers more autonomy in making Reasonable and Prudent Parenting decisions on behalf of the children and youth in their care. Young people in foster care now have more flexibility to:



PRACTICE
AUTONOMY,
DECISION MAKING,
& HEALTHY RISK-
TAKING



ENGAGE IN
SELF-EXPLORATION



EXPLORE SKILLS
& INTERESTS



BUILD & MAINTAIN
SUPPORTIVE
RELATIONSHIPS

TIPS

for Youth, Foster Parents, Group Care Providers, Caregivers & Adult Allies:

- 1 Discuss what “normal” experiences means to you.** This could include activities many people take for granted including using the internet or having a cell phone, going on a weekend trip, playing a sport or going to a movie with friends.
- 2 Be up-to-date on requirements and trainings** to implement the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard for foster parents, caregivers and group care providers. This includes what decisions can be made without consulting the Department of Child Safety as well as when the Department must be notified for approval or consultation.
- 3 Be informed on the Arizona Department of Child Safety Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Policy.** Check out: <https://dcs.az.gov/about/dcs-polices> and click on **Chapter 4: Section 14**
- 4 Check out the Normalcy section on the Fostering Advocates Arizona website at fosteringadvocatesarizona.org** and hear from the experts, young adults who have experienced foster care, on what normalcy means to them.