

# Caregiver Guidelines for Supporting Normal Childhood Activities for Children and Youth Experiencing Out-of-Home Care



It is important for children and youth experiencing foster care to have normal childhood experiences similar to their peers who are not experiencing foster care. Foster parents, kinship caregivers, and group care facilities (who will be referred to as caregivers throughout this document) are authorized by RCW 74.13.710 to use a “prudent parenting” standard.



This standard is characterized by careful and thoughtful parental decisions intended to maintain a child’s health, safety, and best interest, which encourages the child’s emotional growth and development. For more information, go to <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=74.13.710>. Caregivers can provide or withhold permission without prior approval of the DCYF caseworker or agency to allow a child or youth in their care to participate in normal childhood activities based on this standard.



A “normal childhood activity” includes age or developmentally appropriate “extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities, and may include overnight activities outside the direct supervision of the caregiver for a period of over twenty-four hours and up to seventy-two hours.” Normal childhood activities within the described time frames, including being babysat, do not require background checks or prior department approval. Licensed foster parents must still follow the minimum licensing requirements for child foster homes in WAC 110-148.

A youth in Extended Foster Care is a “child” for the purposes of the dependency and must comply with responsibilities in WAC 110-90-0170; otherwise, the youth has the legal status and legal rights of an adult and is responsible for their actions. For more information, go to <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=110-90-0170>.



Child/Youth Activity Category	Examples of normal childhood activities caregivers can approve independently*	Examples of childhood activities DCYF must approve* or obtain a court order
<p><i>DCYF caseworker approval or a new court order is needed any time an activity is in conflict with any court order or supervision/safety plan. Prior DCYF caseworker approval is required if the agency is expected to pay costs or fees associated with the child or youth's participation in an activity.</i></p>		
<p><b>Family Recreation</b></p>	<p><b>Children and youth should use required and/or appropriate safety equipment and protective gear for all activities. They should be closely supervised for water activities.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movies</li> <li>• Community events</li> <li>• Family events (less than 72 hours)</li> <li>• Camping (less than 72 hours)</li> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Boating</li> <li>• Swimming</li> <li>• Biking</li> <li>• Other sporting activities</li> <li>• River tubing</li> <li>• River rafting</li> </ul>	<p>Any event or activity over 72 hours</p>
<p><b>Social/Extra-curricular Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Less than 72 hours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camps</li> <li>• Field trips</li> <li>• School-related activities</li> <li>• Faith-based activities</li> <li>• Youth organization activities</li> <li>• Sports activities</li> <li>• Community activities</li> <li>• Social activities with peers</li> <li>• Spending the night away from the caregiver's home</li> </ul>	<p><b>More than 72 hours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camps</li> <li>• Field trips</li> <li>• School-related activities</li> <li>• Faith-based activities</li> <li>• Youth organization activities</li> <li>• Sports activities</li> <li>• Community activities</li> <li>• Social activities with peers</li> <li>• Spending the night away from the caregiver's home</li> </ul>

*\*Neither the agency nor the caregiver will be held liable for injuries to the child that occur as a result of authority granted unless the action or inaction of the agency resulting in injury constitutes willful or wanton misconduct.*

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<p><b>Motorized Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Children, youth, and caregivers must comply with all laws and use appropriate protective/safety gear when riding or operating motorized vehicles and equipment.</b></p> <p><b>Children and youth</b> <i>riding</i> a motorized vehicle with an adult may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Snowmobile</li> <li>• All-terrain vehicle</li> <li>• Jet ski</li> <li>• Tractor</li> </ul> <p><b>Youth at least 14 years</b> <i>operating</i> motorized equipment or vehicle may include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lawnmower</li> <li>• Snowmobile</li> <li>• All-terrain vehicle</li> <li>• Jet ski</li> <li>• Tractor</li> </ul>	<p>Children and youth <b>under 14</b> years old are not permitted to operate motorized equipment or vehicles (e.g., lawnmower, motorcycle).</p>
<p><b>Driving</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caregiver acts as the “parent/guardian” for the purposes of the Intermediate Driver’s License Law.</li> <li>• Caregiver must provide and pay for insurance for the child driving and agree to maintain and pay for insurance until the child reaches age 18 or until another responsible adult assumes financial liability risks for the child. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Driver’s education classes</li> <li>- Driver’s training</li> <li>- Driver’s test</li> <li>- Issuance of a personal driver’s license</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DCYF caseworker must complete and submit the Request for Washington State Instruction Permit or Personal Driver License (DCYF 02- 636) form to DOL before a youth can obtain the permit or license.</li> <li>• Youth must have an Identocard form (DCYF 11-077-on file with DOL <b>prior</b> to seeking a driver’s permit or license (this can be submitted with –DCYF 02-636).</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Travel</b></p>	<p>All travel within the United States <b>less</b> than 72 hours</p> <p><i>Travel to the British Columbia (BC) territories of BC Rockies, Thompson/Okanogan, and Vancouver Coast and Mountains are considered 'border counties' to Washington State and do not require out-of-country approval if less than 72 hours. All territories beyond are considered out of country travel.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All travel <b>more</b> than 72 hours.</li> <li>• All out-of-country travel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Employment/ Babysitting</b></p> <p>Resource: <a href="http://www.Lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/youth-employment/prohibited-duties">www.Lni.wa.gov/workers-rights/youth-employment/prohibited-duties</a></p>	<p>Youth 14 years old or older and following WAC 296-125</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview for employment</li> <li>• Continuation of current employment</li> <li>• Does not interfere with school</li> </ul> <p>For more information, go to <a href="http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=296-125">http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=296-125</a></p>	<p>Youth is 13 years old or younger</p>
<p><b>Babysitting</b></p>	<p>Foster parents' legal children age 16 years and older may supervise no more than three children experiencing foster care.</p> <p>Children in out-of-home care being cared for by an unlicensed kinship caregiver may be supervised by youth and adults under the prudent parenting standard.</p>	<p>Foster children being cared for by foster parents and licensed kinship caregivers may not babysit other children and youth experiencing foster care.</p> <p>Sexually aggressive and physically assaultive youth may not babysit children.</p>
<p><b>Religious Participation</b></p>	<p>Attend a religious service of the child or youth's choice.</p>	<p>Notify the caseworker when the child, youth, and legal parent choices are in conflict.</p>

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