QPI Conference

Information Sharing and Normalcy

March 10, 2016
Office of Child Welfare, Department of Children and Families
Information Sharing

- Social Networking
- What Can Be Shared with Foster Parents
**Social Networking**

Principles to Consider:
1. Child’s right to privacy
2. Child’s right to live a normal life

- Foster families may post images of their foster children on social media provided the child’s status in foster care is not disclosed.
- Foster children may use social media and have the right to disclose their own status.

DCF Memo: Online Social Networking Policy (February 22, 2012)
Information Sharing with Foster Parents
DCF Memo: Sharing Case Records/Information with Foster Parents (October 29, 2010)

Children are best served through partnerships and effective information sharing!


What must be shared?  - Medical and Behavioral Health  - Court Orders – Visitation and Case Plans – GAL Reports – School Records – Birth Certificates and Immigration Docs – Consents – Staffing Forms
Questions from Statewide Call

- What can foster families share with other foster families: getting support vs violating confidentiality?
- Social Media:
  - Disclosures on Social Media
  - Underground Facebook Pages
Normalcy

- What is Normalcy?
- Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard
- Babysitting
- Emergency Care
- Extended Overnight Stays
- Vacation
(1) FINDINGS AND INTENT.—
(a) The Legislature finds that every day parents make important decisions about their child’s participation in activities and that caregivers for children in out-of-home care are faced with making the same decisions for a child in their care.
(b) The Legislature also finds that when a caregiver makes decisions, he or she must consider applicable laws, rules, and regulations to safeguard the health and safety of a child in out-of-home care and that those rules and regulations have commonly been interpreted to prohibit children in out-of-home care from participating in extracurricular activities.
(c) The Legislature further finds that participation in these types of activities is important to the child’s well-being, not only emotionally, but in developing valuable life-coping skills.
(d) It is the intent of the Legislature to recognize the importance of making every effort to normalize the lives of children in out-of-home care and to empower a caregiver to approve or disapprove a child’s participation in activities based on the caregiver’s own assessment using a reasonable and prudent parent standard, without prior approval of the department, the caseworker, or the court.
“Reasonable and prudent parent standard” means the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child’s health, safety, and best interests while at the same time encouraging the child’s emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in out-of-home care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.
### Babysitting
- Sitters can be 14+ (those age 14 and 15 must have completed a recognized sitting course).
- FP will ensure sitter is suitable.
- FP must provide sitter guidance for emergencies, including relevant contact information, discipline, and confidentiality.
- Babysitting does not have to occur in a licensed setting.

### Emergency Care
- If the FP must be absent overnight and child cannot accompany them, the FP may select a person well known to them to provide care.
- FP must notify the CM of the arrangements.
- In these situations, CM must conduct local and abuse history checks within 24 hours...with a full background check to be completed the following day.

### Extended Overnight Care
- When a FP will be absent more than 48 hrs:
  - FP may select someone suitable and well known to them to provide care.
  - These caregivers must have criminal and abuse hx checks, incl. finger prints.

DCF Memo: Normalcy, Babysitting, Vacation, and Emergency Care for Children in OHC (March 5, 2013)
- 65C-13.033
Vacation

- FP’s shall take children in their care with them on vacation whenever possible.
- FP’s shall inform the CM of trip arrangements.
- Typical “placement” orders allow FPs to travel for up to 14 consecutive days without further order of the Court.

DCF Memo:
Normalcy, Babysitting, Vacation, and Emergency Care for Children in OHC
(March 5, 2013)
Other Limitations

- FP must notify CM when the child’s stay away from the foster home will exceed 1 night (March 5, 2013 memo)
- FP must notify CM of planned travel – most court orders require notice 14 days in advance
- FP’s normalcy activities and travel plans cannot interfere with court orders, including visitation plans
- CBC must approve the babysitting course for sitters ages 14 and 15
Other Submitted Questions
## Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Babysitting Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the maximum length of stay a foster parent may place a child with someone known to them for “respite” in unlicensed care?</td>
<td>Input for policy development?</td>
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## Question

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<th>Capacity Questions</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the rules related to normalcy for sibling visitation, such as all</td>
<td>Input for policy development?</td>
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<td>siblings staying with one caregiver for a weekend?</td>
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<td>2. What happens when normalcy puts us at odds with licensing standards (licensed</td>
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<td>capacity)?</td>
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Other Questions?
Thank you for your time and attention!