



POLICY TITLE:		<i>Temporary Supervision of Children in Foster Care</i>	
 		CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY	
Approved By:	Date Approved:	Original Effective Date:	Last Revision:
Brenda Donald	March 4, 2019	December 24, 2008	

I. AUTHORITY	<p>The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Agency) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency's mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws and regulations, including but not limited to 29 DCMR §§ 6001.1(j); 6002.1(a) and (k)-(m); D.C. Code §§ 4-1303.03f, 16-2301(9)(A)(ii) and 16-2301(3)-(5); and the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (128 Stat 1919).</p> <p><i>This policy supersedes administrative issuance CFSA-08-7 Children's Self-Care and Care for Others, dated December 24, 2008.</i></p>
II. APPLICABILITY	<p>This policy applies to CFSA staff, contracted personnel, contracted agency personnel, and resource providers.</p>
III. RATIONALE	<p>The reasonable and prudent parent standard (RPP) is a standard, characterized 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 resource provider is empowered to apply when determining whether to allow the child/youth to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities.</p> <p>For parents, selecting an appropriate babysitter or determining whether a child can be left unsupervised for a short period of time are everyday decisions. Resource parents (hereinafter, "resource providers") need guidelines, undergirded by the RPP standard, to assist them to make these decisions for children in foster care.</p> <p>This policy provides a decision-making framework for appropriate application of the RPP standard with respect to temporary supervision, with the intent of empowering resource providers and promoting normalcy for youth in care.</p>

<p>IV. POLICY</p>	<p>It is the policy of CFSA to promote a sense of normalcy for youth in the foster care system.</p> <p>CFSA's policy is to empower resource providers to apply the reasonable and prudent parent (RPP) standard when selecting individuals to temporarily supervise the children in their care on an occasional, infrequent, or irregular basis (i.e., babysit).</p> <p>This policy does not apply to decisions around selecting child care providers for regular and recurring resource parent absences from the home, such as for employment. Such regular, recurring child care providers must be licensed in good standing in the jurisdiction in which they operate.</p> <p>In developing plans for temporary supervision or unsupervised periods, resource providers should be encouraged to engage and solicit the insights of birth parents (to the extent that it is clinically appropriate and practicable), either directly or through their social workers.</p> <p>Social workers are to discuss these policy guidelines with resource providers and encourage the application of the RPP standard in decision-making.</p> <p>Discussions and decisions regarding decisions outlined under this policy are to be documented in FACES as appropriate.</p>
<p>V. CONTENTS</p>	<p>A. Application of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to Child Supervision Decisions</p> <p>B. Guidelines for Temporary Supervision (Babysitting) Plans for Children in Foster Care</p> <p>C. Guidelines for Allowing a Child in Foster Care to be Temporarily Unsupervised</p>
<p>VI. SECTIONS</p>	<p>Section A: Application of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent (RPP) Standard to Child Supervision Decisions</p> <p>1. Effective application of the RPP standard is predicated on the resource provider's familiarity with the child. Communication with the case management team and the birth parent in particular informs the application of the RPP standard. The standard involves decision-making based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Limitations and prohibitions contained in the child's case plan and court orders. b. The birth parent's previously stated preferences for, or objections to, particular types of activities. c. The resource provider's understanding of the child's family, culture, needs and interests. d. The child's preferences and comfort level with the plan, and the duration of the arrangement. e. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level, behavioral history, and any developmental challenges, including those that might adversely impact the plan (e.g., risk of running away or challenges to behavioral management). f. The child's mental and physical health, including any medication

<p>POLICY TITLE</p>	<p>PAGE NUMBER</p>
<p>Temporary Supervision of Children in Foster Care</p>	<p>Page 2 of 4</p>

	<p>regimen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. The skill, experience, and capacity of the temporary caregiver to meet the child’s unique needs, including the appropriateness of the babysitter’s home, if that is where care is to be provided. h. The extent to which the plan promotes normalcy for the child. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Resource providers should be encouraged to consult the child’s assigned social worker, resource parent support worker, or contract monitor whenever they believe that that they cannot make an informed decision (following application of the RPP standard above). 3. Under District law, resource providers will not be held liable for any civil damages resulting from the application or the failure to apply the RPP standard, except in cases constituting gross negligence.
	<p>Section B: Guidelines for Temporary Supervision (Babysitting) Plans for Children in Foster Care</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The babysitter of a child in foster care must be 16 years of age or older. 2. Resource providers shall inform the babysitter of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The expected duration of the babysitting arrangement. b. The emotional and behavioral needs of the child. c. Any “ground rules” or restrictions on activities due to the needs and best interest of the child. d. The child’s typical bed time. e. Activities that the child enjoys, and location of suitable and age-appropriate toys and books. f. Emergency contact numbers for the resource provider and social worker and other emergency contacts (e.g., 911 and poison control). g. Known allergies of the child and steps to take in response to an allergic reaction. h. How to manage medical and physical conditions the child may have that also may require the use of special equipment. 3. The resource provider should be accessible by cell phone and be able to return to (or retrieve) the youth, if necessary, or have an alternative plan for doing so involving another responsible adult (or back-up caregiver). 4. If the child is in need of an overnight babysitter (away from the foster home), the resource provider is to ensure that the arrangement aligns with the child supervision requirements that are detailed in the Administrative Issuance on Travel and Overnight Stays.

POLICY TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Temporary Supervision of Children in Foster Care	Page 3 of 4

Section C: Guidelines for Allowing a Child in Foster Care to be Temporarily Unsupervised

Resource providers are to assess each situation individually, and consider factors such as the child’s age, maturity, overall safety, and duration of the unsupervised time.

CFSA’s guiding principle on this decision point is that a child in foster care under 12 years of age should not be left unattended or unsupervised.

Children of any age with disabilities or medical needs who require constant care or supervision are not to be left alone for any reason.

The guidelines below apply to any situation in which a resource provider decides to allow any child to be unsupervised for any period of time:

1. The duration of the resource provider’s absence must be commensurate with the youth’s capacity to be unsupervised, and there should be a clear plan for the child’s meals during the absence.
2. Resource providers should articulate clear “ground rules” for the youth to follow during the resource provider’s absence.
3. Resource providers must arrange for the youth to have access to a telephone during the resource provider’s absence.
4. The youth should know the contact information for the resource parent and/or other responsible adult(s) who are able to assist the youth in an emergency.
5. The resource parent should be accessible by cell phone and be able to return to (or retrieve) the youth, if necessary, or have an alternative plan for doing so involving another responsible adult.
6. The youth should know emergency procedures to evacuate the home without assistance in case of an emergency.
7. No child in foster care who is under the age of 16 shall supervise another child without an adult in the home.
8. No child in foster care under the age of 18 should be left home without supervision overnight.

POLICY TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
Temporary Supervision of Children in Foster Care	Page 4 of 4