

Normalcy Training



Trainer Guide and Attachments

The materials for the **Normalcy Training** curriculum were produced by the Child Welfare Leadership Program Class IV, Normalcy Training Project Team with the Department of Children and Families in August 2008.

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Attachments:

Power Point Slides

Resource Guide

- **8/31/05 Signed Memo from DCF Secretary**
- **Rights & Expectations for Children and Youth in Shelter or Foster Care**
- **Age Appropriate Activities and Responsibilities**
- **Normalcy Guidelines**
- **Examples of Normalcy Plans**
- **The Center for Advancement of Child Welfare Practices link**

Historical Perspective

The 2007-2008 Child Welfare Leadership Team Class IV is comprised of 27 child welfare professionals from the Department, Community Based Care agencies, and Sheriff Offices from around the State of Florida. These individuals represent Child Protective Investigations, Services Counselors, Supervisors, Child Legal Services and Administrators and Trainers from Operations and Program Management.

The creation and development of a Statewide Normalcy Training curricula became apparent during our Class Meetings when we began to discuss what different Circuits, Regions, Agencies were implementing in respect to training staff and community partners ‘Normalcy’ for our children and youth in licensed out-of-home care. Unfortunately, very few had a curricula or training that was provided to staff on the guidelines and legal definition of ‘Normalcy’. Also, the mandated Normalcy Plans were not being developed for the youth and most licensed caregivers and providers were unaware of the guidelines and need for our youth to have opportunities for ‘normal’ age-appropriate experiences.

The intent of developing this Statewide Normalcy Training curricula is to educate the many Stakeholders that interact with our youth on an on-going basis. We have included Statutes and Florida Administrative Code to assist the many stakeholders in identifying their role and responsibilities for providing Normalcy opportunities to our youth in licensed out-of-home care.

Our main goal is to provide the child welfare professionals from the many different arenas the education and knowledge to assist our youth in becoming and acquiring normal childhood experiences and skills in order to lead a successful adult life. We are encouraged that by providing this training it will help reduce placement disruption, encourage partnership and collaboration amongst the stakeholders and allow the opportunity for our Youth to be successful.

Child Welfare Leadership Program Project Team Members

**The Normalcy Training curriculum was developed by the following
Child Welfare Leadership Program Class IV participants:**

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The Normalcy Training Curriculum Project Team Members wish to thank their Child Welfare Leadership Program Classmates for their assistance and support in creating and developing the training curricula.

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Course Description

Purpose:

To educate and provide knowledge to partners in child welfare to ensure children maintain stability and positive connections while placed in licensed out-of-home care. The training will create a better understanding of the partnership between the youth, caregivers and agency staff who are entrusted to their care. Chapter 39 and Florida Administrative Code have included Normalcy Plans and the need for youth in licensed out-of-home care to be provided with opportunities for normal childhood experiences and skills.

Target Audience:

This curriculum is intended to meet the needs of any and all agencies involved in the child welfare and child protection system. Staff employed by the Department of Children and Families, Community Based Care Agencies, Law Enforcement Agencies, Guardian-ad-Litem, Child Legal Services, and other community partners working to provide children in licensed out-of-home care with a safe and permanent environment that will promote the youth's skills for independent living.

Implementation:

This curriculum is encouraged to be implemented into the Child Welfare Pre-Service Training curricula, Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) Training and provided to all staff on an on-going basis as In-Service Training.

Training Objectives

Topic One – Introduction

- Describe the Need for Normalcy Training

Topic Two – Legal Definition and Guidelines for Normalcy

- Defining the concept of ‘Normalcy’
- Describe the primary legal references for Normalcy in Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code

Topic Three – Roles and Responsibilities

- Overview of Independent Living and Normalcy partnership
- Identify Stakeholders and their impact on Normalcy
- Define the roles of the Primary Stakeholders

Topic Four – Summary and Closure

- Identifying How to put Normalcy into Practice

TOPIC ONE - INTROUDCTION

➤ Display PP2 Slide – Training Objectives

- Provide an introduction to Normalcy
- Provide and overview of Legal Definitions and Guidelines for Normalcy
- Identify the Primary Stakeholders and their Role and Responsibilities
- How to put the requirements into case work practice.

Provide a brief description of the overall Training Objectives that will be presented during the training time. Refer participants to the Resource Guide that will be used during the training and is provided to the participant.

Objective: Describe the Need for Normalcy Training

➤ Display PP3 Slide – The Importance of Normalcy

In order to understand the ‘need’ for Normalcy Training – we first need to understand the importance of Normalcy in our youth’s lives. *(Briefly, open questions up to the audience and summarize the need – identify that the goal of this training is to answer the following questions on Normalcy)*

(Ask) ? Why is Normalcy important for our youth in out-of-home care.

Have brief discussion on the following points:

- Normalcy for Youth *(Why is Normalcy important for Youth in out-of-home care)*
- Developing Normalcy or Teen Plan *(Why is important to develop a Normalcy or Teen Plan for their activities)*
- Involvement of the Youth in development and on-going needs *(Why is important to have the Youth involved in the staffings, court hearings and plan development)*

- Collaboration between partners and providers (*Why do we need to include everyone in Normalcy*)

A standardized Normalcy Training curriculum is needed to present the legal mandates and requirements for Normalcy with our youth placed in licensed out-of-home care; and also to identify and support the youth's need for normal childhood experiences and opportunities to prepare for independent living.

It is a collaborative effort between the Department of Children and Families, Community Based Care Agencies, Sheriff's Offices and other community partners who work with our youth to strengthen their skills while in licensed out-of-home placement.

In order to understand the concept of Normalcy, it is best to hear from a youth who was placed in licensed out-of-home care and their story of what they achieved.

➤ [Show Video – 'A Journey to Normalcy'](#)

Encourage each of the participants to think about during the training at least one idea and task they can implement immediately upon return to their office in regards to Normalcy. Ask the participants to write that idea and task onto a post-it note during the training. At the end of training, ask a few (3 or less depending on time) participants to share their idea and task they identified.

TOPIC TWO – LEGAL DEFINITION AND GUIDELINES FOR NORMALCY

Objective: Define the concept of 'Normalcy'

We've briefly discussed the importance of Normalcy, now we need to answer the question of 'What is Normalcy' to understand the history of Normalcy and the legal mandates:

➤ Display PP5 Slide – What is Normalcy

? What is Normalcy

Normalcy is the right for ALL YOUTH in licensed out-of-home care the opportunity for normal growth and development; to include age-appropriate activities, responsibilities and life skills.

In 2005, the State Youth Advisory Board (a leadership group comprised of child welfare advocates and current and former foster care youth) met with former Department of Children and Families Secretary, Lucy Hadi, during legislative session regarding the issues and concerns from across the State regarding the lack of skills and opportunities are youth in licensed care were not being provided.

On August 31, 2005, Secretary Hadi wrote a memorandum addressing Normalcy for Children in the Custody of the Department. The memo included reference to the barriers that our youth were experiencing while placed in licensed care and provided guidance in allowing teens in foster care to be provided a normal living environment.

Refer participants to Resource Guide for the Department of Children and Families Secretary Lucy Hadi signed memo ‘Normalcy for Children in Custody of the Department’ – dated August 31, 2005.

July 1, 2008, Legislative updates clarified the language that ALL youth in out-of-home care are required to have a Normalcy or Teen Plan.

Objective: Describe the Primary Legal References for Normalcy in Florida Statute and Florida Administrative Code

Review PP4 Slide (Legal Definitions for Normalcy) briefly.

➤ Display PP6 Slide – Legal References for Normalcy

- **FL Statute – Chapter 409.1451**
- **FL Administrative Code**
- **65C-13 Substitute Care of Children** (*This FAC has been updated as of April 6, 2008 to reflect and clarify the language regarding Normalcy and Teen Planning*)
 - **65C-28.009 Adolescent Services**
 - **65C-31 Services to Young Adults Formerly in the Custody of the Department**

Then transition to PP7 and briefly discuss the following legal directives and mandates regarding Normalcy:

➤ **Display PP7 Slide – Normalcy for Foster Care Children**

Florida Statute 409.1451 – Agency Responsibilities include

- Providing youth the opportunities to participate in life skills in their foster home placement and communities being reasonable and appropriate for their ages and taking into consideration any special needs they have.
- Providing services to build life skills and increase ability to live independently and become self-sufficient.
- Support opportunities for participation in age-appropriate activities.
- Working closely with youth to set early achievement and career goals for educational employment experiences.

➤ **Display PP8 Slide – With This Focus on Normalcy**

Florida Statute 409.1451 – Mandated Agencies to

- Develop a list of age-appropriate activities and responsibilities for older youth
- Provide training to address issues of older children in foster care including areas of education, vocational, and employment opportunities
- Develop a written plan that outlines the authority of the foster parent/caregivers and identifies age-appropriate activities
- Provide opportunities for youth to interact with mentors
- Develop process for older youth to directly access and manage personal allowance

- Make a good faith effort to fully explain any document to the youth prior to the execution of any signature. Ensure that documents are explained and written in language the youth can understand.

➤ Display PP9 & PP10 Slide – How we can meet these mandates

1. We will be providing a list of age-appropriate activities and responsibilities today during training that was established and created by the State Youth Advisory Board in March 2003.

2. A Rights and Expectations for Children and Youth in Shelter or Foster Care Pamphlet was created and provide by the Department of Children and Families and it's Community Partners to be distributed to all youth in licensed out-of-home care placement.

- For copies of the 'Rights and Expectations for Children and Youth in Shelter or Foster Care' Pamphlet – please contact the Office of Family Safety, Independent Living Coordinator.

Refer participants to Resource Guide for a copy of the 'Rights and Expectations for Children and Youth in Shelter or Foster Care' pamphlet.

3. Various Agencies have already developed written plans that outline and identify age-appropriate activities. We will be reviewing the Normalcy Plan and will provide you with sample of various ones from Community Based Agencies from around the State of Florida.

4. We will be discussing the directives included in Florida Administrative Code regarding allowances for youth in licensed placement and the need for youth to learn budgeting and finance skills.

TOPIC THREE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Objective: Overview of Independent Living and Normalcy Partnership

➤ Display PP11 Slide – Stakeholders Roles and Responsibilities

We've discussed the legal definition and guidelines of Normalcy – now let's look at some basic expectations listed in Statute and Florida Administrative Code of how we can begin to work in partnership with our youth on creating Normalcy (*briefly discussed each one listed below*):

➤ [Display PP12 Slide – Pre-Independent Living](#)

- Pre-Independent Living – FAC 65C-28.009(5)

Youth ages 13 but not yet 15 years of age in the custody of the Department shall have an assessment completed within 30 days after the youth's 13th birthday or within 60 days after the court enters order placing child in the custody of Department. (*note: some Agencies use the Ansell- Casey Assessment, although a particular assessment is not mandated*)

➤ [Display PP13 Slide – Life Skills Services](#)

- Life Skills Services – FAC 65C-28.009(6)

Youth age 15 but not yet 18 years of age shall have a assessment completed within 30 days after the 15th birthday or within 30 days after court enters an order placing child in the custody of the Department. (*note: some Agencies use the Daniel Memorial Assessment, although a particular assessment is not mandated*)

➤ [Display PP14 Slide – The Educational & Career Path](#)

- Statute 409.1451 and FAC 65C-28.009

➤ [Display PP15 Slide – Youth Attending Court](#)

- Statute 39.701(6)(a) and FAC 65C-28.009(9)(a)

Refer participants to Resource Guide for examples of ‘Educational and Career Path’ Plans from around the State of Florida.
(Samples were retrieved from the Center for Advancement of Child Welfare Practices)

Objective: Identify Stakeholders and their Impact on Normalcy

- Display PP16 Slide – Topic Three – Objective
- Display PP17 Slide – Who Needs to Know about Normalcy?

Knowing the legal definition and the foundation of the term ‘Normalcy’ –
Ask: ***Who needs to know about ‘Normalcy’?***

Suggested Responses:

Hotline
CPI
Care Managers
Foster Parents/Group Homes
Child Placing Agencies/Licensing Agencies
Youth
School
Child Legal Services
Guardian-ad-Litem
Birth Parents
And many more....

We will call this list our ‘Stakeholders’ – ‘one who has a share or an interest’.

(Ask) ? : How do these identified Stakeholders interact/impact with ‘Normalcy’?

Hotline

- Understanding the intent of ‘Normalcy’ when attaching abuse, neglect allegations

CPI

- Being able to communicate to foster parents/group homes when a child is initially placed the concept of ‘Normalcy’

Care Managers

- Being able to ‘practice’ Normalcy with their children in licensed out-of-home care, conveying that to the Court, supporting the foster parents/group homes, encouraging children to participate in these ‘normal’ childhood experiences and providing guidance to foster parents.

Foster Parents/Group Homes

- Preparing a Normalcy Plan with the youth, communicating the plan with the Care Manager, GAL and encouraging the child to experience ‘normal’ childhood.

Child Placing Agencies/Licensing Agencies

- Educating and supporting foster parents/group home staff to engage the child in normal childhood experiences and provide guidance and consistency to the foster parent/group home staff.

Youth

- Understanding the importance of connections and stability they have in their lives prior and during the intervention.

School

- Understanding that children in licensed out-of-home can have the same benefits and opportunities presented to them as all children within the school system.

Child Legal Services

- Understanding the intent of the Law

Guardian-ad-Litem

- Providing support and guidance to the youth, foster parent, group home staff in ensuring that the child is provided the opportunities of ‘normal’ childhood experiences.

Birth Parents

- Providing information and support to the youth while placed in out-of-home care to maintain connections and stability.

It is imperative that each one of the identified Stakeholders listed above understands their obligation in providing ‘normal’ childhood experiences (social skills, education, emotional support, etc.) to each child in licensed out-of-home care.

Whether a child is placed in a licensed foster home setting or group home setting, they are entitled to be provided opportunities for ‘normal’ childhood experiences and life skills. Licensed out-of-home children who are diagnosed with mental and/or physical disabilities also need to be included in this directive. Their opportunities will be based on experiences for continued growth and maturation as it will for all children in licensed out-of-home care. Collaborating with Developmental Disabilities staff will be paramount to successful outcome.

However, it is also imperative that our Stakeholders identify all children in out-of-home placement; those children who are 12 years of age and younger, also needing ‘normal’ childhood experiences.

Such as: ‘A Child Protective Investigator asking about extra curricular activities upon removal’ and notifying the caregiver of those activities and the Care Manager encouraged the continuation of those activities.’

It’s important to identify our ‘primary’ Stakeholders Roles and Responsibilities in order to meet the directive established by the DCF Secretary, by Chapter 39, by Florida Administrative Code and for the best interest of the children we interact with on a day-to-day basis.

Objective: Define the Roles and Responsibilities of the Primary Stakeholders

Although you were able to identify many Stakeholders who impact ‘Normalcy’ for our children we will only be reviewing, what we call, the ‘Primary Stakeholders’ for this particular training.

➤ Display PP18 – Primary Stakeholders

We’ve identified the ‘Primary Stakeholders’ as the Youth, Caregivers, and Child Welfare Professionals.

It is important to understand that the intent of Statute and Florida Administrative Code is to allow these Primary Stakeholders to work as **team members** to reach the goal of improving the skill set of the youth to be successful in achieving independent living.

➤ Display PP19 – Role of the Youth

➤ Display PP20 – Out-of-Home Caregivers Role

FAC 65C-13.029

➤ Display PP21 – How Do Caregivers Do This

Florida Statute 409.1451(4)(b)1 – Life Skills Services

➤ Display PP22 – Role of Child Welfare Professional

➤ Display PP23 – Requirements of Child Welfare Professionals

Briefly discuss ‘other ways to Normalcy’ as per directed by Florida Administrative Code 65C-13.

FAC 65C-13.029

Pictures

Dating, Outings and Activities

Allowances

Opportunity to Learn to Drive a Car

- Display PP24 – Pictures
- Display PP25 – Dating, Outings, and Activities
- Display PP26 – Allowances
- Display PP27 – Learning to Drive a Car

- Display PP28 – Development of Normalcy or Teen Plan

Identifying age-appropriate activities and skills that youth can have the opportunity to learn and participate in while in licensed out-of-care.

It is the each agency's responsibility to provide those opportunities in age-appropriate activities and encourage participation and to also work closely with youth to set up those early achievement and career goals for educational and employment opportunities.

- Display PP29 – Age-Appropriate Plan aka Normalcy or Teen Plan

Refer to participants to Resource Guide handout on 'Normalcy Guidelines' and 'Age Appropriate Activities and Responsibilities' that was created by the State Youth Advisory Board in March 2003.

Ensure participants understand the importance of educating foster parents and group homes of their role and responsibilities in providing these opportunities for Normalcy.

Note: Both Handouts ('Normalcy Guidelines' and 'Age Appropriate Activities and Responsibilities' can be given to licensed foster parents and group home staff to encourage and educate them in Normalcy activities. Also, these handouts can be used in Pre-Service Training curricula and the Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting (MAPP) curricula when discussing these important topics regarding Independent Living and Normalcy for our Youth in licensed out-of-home care.

Refer participants to the Resource Guide for samples of Normalcy Plans from Community Based Care Agencies.

TOPIC FOUR – SUMMARY AND CLOSURE

Objective: How to Put the Requirements into Case Work Practice

➤ **Display PP30 – Topic Four - Objective**

ACTIVITY: Use this time to 'practice' writing up parts of the Normalcy or Teen Plan based on the different perspectives based on your training group dynamics (i.e. Youth, Foster Parent, GAL, Caseworkers)

Before training activity – need to create 3 or 4 scenarios regarding age-appropriate activities and life skills that Youth need to experience in out-of-home care. Use these scenarios for this activity.

In the beginning of the training presentation, we asked you to think about just one idea or task regarding Normalcy that you could put into action immediately upon returning to your office. Let's discuss a few of them....

Ask for a few volunteers (less than 3 depending on time) to share their idea and task.

Things to remember:

- The Legal Definitions and Guidelines of Normalcy is important
- Communication among all Stakeholders is key
- Working in collaboration to develop a realistic Normalcy Plan
- Building teamwork amongst the Stakeholders to ensure opportunities

END

Optional Endings:

1) Allowing a Youth to share their experience in relation to Normalcy and how it has affected their life.

2) Question and Answer period to allow participants to discuss in a Forum their experiences, barriers, successes and ideas.

3) Provide pre-written scenarios of youth in out-of-home care with directions to develop a Normalcy or Teen Plan as a table or group of participants. Identify a Youth, Caregiver and Case Manager role for each table or group and then have them present to the entire group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Department of Children and Families

State Youth Advisory Board 2003

Out of Home Care Workgroup on Licensing/Normalcy 2006

Community Based Care of Brevard, Inc.

Hillsborough Kids Incorporated

Children's Network of Southwest Florida, LLC

Sarasota YMCA

Safe Children's Coalition

Families First Network of Lakeview

Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice

For more information on Normalcy and to access a copy of the Normalcy Training curricula please go to the Florida's Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice website at <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu>