

Here's what people are saying about how they are implementing Normalcy in their areas.

Post 1 (September 24, 2010):

I have had foster parents and other caregivers complain of the requirement that there must be separate bedrooms for a boy and girl under all circumstances. I know of a foster parent that could not have a sibling in a case because they did not have two bedrooms available and one child was a boy and one was a girl. One of the children was still in a crib and the other child was a toddler. In these type of circumstances, many families would consider it NORMAL for a male and female child to have their crib and toddler bed in the same room. I believe it more important as well as the foster parents that I talked to to keep siblings together than to have a requirement that there be separate bedrooms for each child. In the implementation of licensing foster homes or completing home studies on families, there should be some ability to judge whether a male and female child can sleep in the same room.

Post 2 (September 24, 2010):

I think we should be at least considering giving permission for teens in foster care to baby sit their younger siblings for short periods of time. Most of these older children were caretakers for the younger kids way before they entered care, and it is indeed "normal" within most families that the older children look after the younger ones for brief periods of time. Obviously, based upon the "normalcy policy", the foster parent and the counselor should be able to make this decision based upon the character and ability of the teen.

Post 3 (September 24, 2010):

I am a foster parent for the Family Resource Center located in Downtown Miami-Dade County. I also work for the Charlee Program. The Memo dated 09/03/2010 on Normalcy for our Children in Foster Care. I have been a foster parent with FRC since 2007. My first set of children was a family of five, but I had four of the kids living in my home. The kids were white children ages 6-12. Two boys ages 6 & 9, girls ages 11 & 12 years old. The word foster child was non-existence in our home. My child excel in school tremendously. When the children came into the home they were shy, crying hording food. The youngest boy not go anywhere without his oldest sister. He would always cry in the morning the afternoons after he got out of school he would wait in the door look for S.K. but after several months of being in the house and having a normal life I saw a change in all the children's behavior. You could see the sense of calm on the face of the K. children. They were adopted by their aunt who lives in Virginia. Then I got the challenge of my life when I start taking in teenagers. All they want is just to belong to some one. They want discipline in their life, they want to live like other children around them so that what I started doing allowing them to visit their friends, go over the friends house and met the parent that means a lot to them. Say no and mean no when it is time to they want that discipline as if they were your own blood relatives. Normalcy is all they want it cuts down on the disruptive behavior it teaches them how to be responsible, with time management and other valuable things they need to learn about in life. And it teaches them respect for ones opinion. That what Normalcy with my children have done for us. It has not been easy but with the support of the case managers and their supervisor. I have watch about nine age out gracefully 3 graduated, 3 graduating this year it has been a pleasure.

Post 4 (September 27, 2010):

I think the children over 15 should be allowed to have cell phones for safety reasons. They would have limited calling and texting. Since all normal teens have cell phones. I think the teens should be encouraged to attend all school activities such as football and basketball games, proms, homecomings etc. so they will have memories of good times in high school. If they do attend a photograph should be taken of them participating in these activities. If foster parents can't attend the function then the case worker should. Encourage our youth and show that we care. A Teens Special Day; This would be the full case manager spending one day a year with a teen on their case load, (one on one), either shopping, movies or professional sports event. Once the teen turns 17 the Independent Living Counselor does the Teens Special Day (one on one) contact encouraging them to stay in school and explaining the benefits of aging out of care since these benefits keep changing. This will also give the new independent Living counselors a chance to know their clients better and understanding their special needs.

Post 5 (September 27, 2010):

I think the whole reunification process should be totally revamped. I think reunification cases should be heard by a panel of 3-4 foster parents, 1-2 case managers, guardian ad-litem and an attorney. They should decide the course for reunification and the time for reunification. Each county should have its own panel. I think they could all be recommended by the case management agency involved. I am certainly willing and able to work to help this process become a reality. Children being yanked around is not acceptable and I have long advocated to have the reunification process changed. That would make normalcy a reality.

Post 6 (September 28, 2010):

Children in care need to feel like they belong and do not stand out with a neon sign on them. One way to do this is to be allowed to be called by their name or your child...lose the "foster" identifier.

Post 7 (September 28, 2010):

For school age children, I would like to see them allowed to attend birthday parties, "occasional" sleep overs with friends to homes that the foster parents are very familiar with without the need for background checks. I did state occasional as we would our own children for a party as young ladies like to do. They should be allowed to attend school and church functions without relying on background checks to those who will be chaperoning...much the same as we allow for the children to attend school or day care.

For adolescents, the freedom to make their own decisions regarding activities such as attending sports events, dances, school functions, dating, drive ed classes, getting a license to drive, hold a job, learn what they need to be prepared to enter society on their own, attend class trips even if overnight as seniors do prior to graduation, etc. All these choices assist them in learning to think on their own, make appropriate decisions, grow as a contributing member of society, etc.

None of this replaces our requirement to have sitters screened as babysitting is not a normal activity for the child...it is more a convenience for the foster parent to attend a function of their own choosing without the children. This should be made clear to avoid the request to use sitters under the normalcy rule. The sleepovers mentioned above is not babysitting it is a child attending a slumber party with numerous other children and adult supervision.

Post 8 (September 28, 2010):

There is a program called PAYA (Preparing Adolescents for Young Adulthood)- This program involves a series of work books that PAYA trained persons assist the child in completing. A monetary stipend is issued to the child when they complete each booklet. The purpose of the stipend (from \$50 to \$500 for the last book) is assist the adolescent in purchasing needed items for their apartment when they move on. Many that I worked with were able to purchase kitchen sets, sheets, towels, kitchen items, etc. This gave the adolescent a good sense of being prepared. I used these booklets while a foster parent in Massachusetts for the teens I served.

Post 9 (October 6, 2010):

The Florida Guardian ad Litem Program developed the following checklist as a normalcy practice aid. [Click Here](#) to access the checklist.