

ASHLAND COUNTY NORMALCY & THE REASONABLE & PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD

Activities-Related Policies

Children in foster care are *entitled* to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities (ORC 2151.315).

A foster caregiver shall allow privileges and assign responsibilities to a foster child similar to those which would be assigned to a family member of the foster caregiver who is of similar age and functioning level (OAC 5101:2-7-11).

ACTIVITY	ODJFS POLICY	Ashland County DJFS Policy ** / Guidelines and Expectations
Participate in case-related meetings such as SARs and permanency staffing.	Youth in care have "the right to have his or her opinions heard and be included, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made affecting his or her life." Youth age 14 and over have the right to participate in case planning and to invite two adults to participate as well.	Every effort should be made by the assigned caseworker to encourage parents, guardians, caregivers, and age-appropriate children to attend and participate in case related meetings. Caregivers should also encourage and support participation for the youth in their homes, with consideration given for school schedule.
Spend the night at a friend's home (Socialization and Overnights Away from the Foster Parent sections)	No specific policy. May be considered a "leave" if the youth is gone longer than 24 hours.	Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to spend the night with a friend. Caregiver must know the friend's family and have conversation with the other parent before approving overnights. It is reasonable to allow the child to spend 1-3 consecutive nights with friends or extended foster family members. If the child is to spend more than 72 hours in the friend's family's home or the foster family's extended family's home, the agency reserves the right to request that the family complete a criminal background check through finger printing and a physical inspection of their home to ensure adequate space and safety.
Have a friend over to spend the night	No specific policy or restrictions.	No specific policy. Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to have a friend spend the night. Caregiver must know the friend's family and have conversation with the other parent before approving overnights.
Dating (Transportation issue addressed in Socialization section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Caregiver and assigned worker should discuss child's behaviors and appropriateness to go out on a date and be unsupervised in the community. No specific policy. However restrictions related to unsupervised time in the community and transportation will apply.

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Be out in the community with friends unchaperoned (Socialization section)	Caregiver shall have prior written approval by the agency specifying whether or not the foster child may be left unattended and, if so, for what period of time.	Caregiver shall have prior written approval by the agency specifying whether or not the foster child may be left unattended and, if so, for what period of time based on that child's ability and behavior. Child must have the ability to contact foster parent if the family does not have a house phone.
Own a cell phone (Cell phone and Cell Phone Use section)	No specific policy. Rules give a foster child the right to communicate with family, friends, and "significant others" in accordance with the service or treatment plan.	<p>Not recommended for children under age 13. Caregivers are encouraged to not allow child to have cell phone after bedtime.</p> <p>Caregivers should set expectations and monitor activity as appropriate to the child's age and developmental level.</p> <p>**Caregivers reserve the right to have rules about cell phones in their homes. The caseworker and caregiver should discuss the child's behavior and developmental level and expectations of the cell phone use and rules.</p> <p>If the child works, they can buy their own phone or the child's parent can buy them their own phone and maintain payments for the phone. The agency will not be responsible for maintenance of the phone or phone bill.</p>
Have social media accounts (Social Media section)	No specific policy. Rules give a foster child the right to communicate with family, friends, and "significant others" in accordance with the service or treatment plan.	<p>Caregivers should set expectations and monitor activity as appropriate to the child's age / development.</p> <p>No pictures of children in the custody of ACDJFS shall be posted to any social media sight.</p>
Get a job or internship	No specific policy or restrictions.	No specific policy. Work experience and internships are encouraged for age appropriate youth and in accordance with their Independent Living Plan.
Participate in extracurricular activities such as school dances and field trips (Socialization section)	No specific policy or restrictions. Foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in school activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.	Foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in school activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Participate in religious activities (Religious Participation section)	Youth in care have the right to enjoy freedom of religion. Meals must conform to religious dietary restrictions. There must be opportunity for the child to practice chosen religion unless it is not in her best interest. No religious procedure can take place without the approval of the birth family.	Youth in care have the right to enjoy freedom of religion. There must be opportunity for the child to practice his/her chosen religion unless caregiver and the child's caseworker determine that it is not in their best interest. No religious procedure can take place without the approval of the birth family.

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Obtain a driver's license (Driver's License section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Currently youth in custody may not drive or obtain a license while in the custody of Ashland County DJFS without abiding by the qualifications set forth in the foster care policy and approved by the director of ACDJFS. Teens may take a driver's education course less the actual driving piece of the program, as part of the independent living plan and nearing emancipation or as part of adoption negotiations.
Ride in a car with a friend who has a license (Socialization section)	Foster caregivers shall ensure that any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle shall be licensed to drive that class of vehicle and that such vehicle is maintained in a safe condition according to state laws. There are also rules regarding proper restraint.	Children ages 16 yrs and older who are in agency custody are able to ride in cars with other teens under the following circumstances: The caregiver must know the teen/family; Caregiver must verify the teen driver's license and insurance information; The teen driver must follow all the guidelines set by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles.
Ride in a car with an adult, such as a friend's parent (Socialization section)	Foster caregivers shall ensure that any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle shall be licensed to drive that class of vehicle and that such vehicle is maintained in a safe condition according to state laws. There are also rules regarding proper restraint.	Any person transporting a foster child in a motor vehicle must have a valid driver's license and must carry liability insurance. The vehicle must be in a safe condition according to state laws and rules regarding use of seat belts / car seats apply.
Ride the city bus, public transit	No specific policy or restrictions.	No specific policy or restrictions. Caregivers will encourage and support children 16 years of age or older to participate in an independent living program or teach independent living skills to them. This will be in accordance with their independent living plan, case plan and or treatment plan.
Obtaining a car	<i>*Under Review*</i>	No current policy. **Under review**
Ride motorized vehicles such as motorcycles and ATVs (At-Risk Activities section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may ride on motorized vehicles with parental and agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times. Participation depends on the developmental and maturity of the child, determined on a case-by-case basis.
Participant in activities with weapons such as hunting and target shooting (At-Risk Activities section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may participate in activities with weapons, such as hunting and target shooting, without parental and agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times. Participation depends on the developmental level and maturity of the child, determined on a case-by-case basis.

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Participate in water sports (At-Risk Activities section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Children in the custody of Ashland County DJFS may participate in water sports with agency permission and must follow all safety laws. They must be supervised by an adult at all times.
Temporarily alter appearance (haircut, hair dye) (Changes in Foster Child's Appearance section)	No specific policy. Should consider the birth family's wishes.	Caregivers may not authorize any action or procedure that might result in a change in appearance of the child without the permission of the child's parent or the agency's permission. This will be determined on a case by case basis.
Permanently alter appearance (piercings, tattoos) (Changes in Foster Child's Appearance section)	No specific policy. Should consider the birth family's wishes.	Caregivers may not authorize any action or procedure that might result in a change in appearance of the child without the permission of the child's parent or the agency's permission. This will be determined on a case by case basis.
Open and maintain a bank account	No specific policy or restrictions. Youth in care have the right to "his own money and personal property in accordance with the child's service or case plan."	No specific policy. All Independent Living teens (age 16 and over) are encouraged to have a bank account. The caregiver must also be signatures on the account to enable access. <i>* Caregivers are not required to be a co-signer on an account*</i>
Be responsible for medication management (Administration of Medication section)	A foster caregiver shall administer or supervise the administration of prescription drugs according to the prescribing physician's instruction. Agencies must have a policy on monitoring the appropriate use of psychotropic medications. Youth in care have "the right to be taught to fulfill appropriate responsibilities to himself and to others."	Caregivers MUST administer prescription drugs to the foster child for whom the medication was prescribed according to the physicians instructions. Children, including teenage children, my not take medication without adult supervision. Follow the agency's Psychotropic Medication Policy.
Take OTC medications (Administration of Mediation section)	No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall be responsible for following instructions of the agency which placed the child for providing health care services to each foster child.	The home must have a locked cabinet or storage area for medication and supplies. Children, including teenage children, my not take medication without adult supervision.
Use essential oils	No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall be responsible for following instructions of the agency which placed the child for providing health care services to each foster child.	No specific policy. May be used with adult supervision.

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Have picture appear in media such as a newspaper or website (Confidentiality and Social Media sections)	No specific policy. A foster caregiver shall not knowingly allow the disclosure of any information regarding the child to persons not directly involved in the child's care and treatment.	Children are not permitted to appear in any form of media or media site without the permission of the agency.
Taking children on vacation	<i>*Under Review*</i>	No specific policy. Parent has the right to know that the child will be going on vacation, but permission is not needed. Arranged visits shall be made up.
Participate in community and cultural events (Socialization section)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in community, school, recreation and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.	Caregivers must encourage and support each foster child to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities and experiences as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Play on a sports team (Socialization section)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in recreation activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level.	Caregivers shall encourage and support each foster child to participate in recreational activities as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Participate in community or school-related club (Socialization section)	No specific policy or restrictions. A foster caregiver shall encourage a foster child to participate in community, school, recreation and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the child's age and functioning level. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.	Caregivers shall encourage and support each foster child to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities as appropriate to the age and functioning level of the children. Caregivers shall arrange appropriate transportation.
Have permission slips signed by caregiver (Education section)	No specific policy or restrictions.	Caregivers are permitted to sign permission slips.

**** The above guidelines are based on current ACDJFS Policies and Procedures. Use this document *only* as a guide. Please refer all questions to Case Worker or Foster/Adoption Assessor.**