

REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENTING ACTIVITIES GUIDE

The Reasonable & Prudent Parenting Standard is a requirement for IV-E agencies per Federal Law [PL 113-183](#) and it became [N.C.G.S. § 131D-10.2A](#) in North Carolina. The reasonable and prudent parent standard means the 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 caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in foster care under the responsibility of North Carolina to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities. Normal childhood activities include, but are not limited to, extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities, and may include overnight activities outside the direct supervision of the caregiver for a period of over 24 hours and up to 72 hours.

This tool is a guide to identify what activities caregivers have the authority (includes signing permissions/waivers) to give permission for a child or youth's participation without the prior approval of their local child welfare agency or licensing agency. The first column in the table shows a category of activities, the second column identifies specific activities within that category that a caregiver has the authority to give permission (or sign whatever might be a part of the activity) without obtaining the agency's approval. The third column identifies those activities that do require the agency's or court's approval.

It is important to realize this is simply a guide as to who has the authority to provide permission. It does not automatically mean that every foster child or youth can participate in any of these activities. It does mean that a reasonable & prudent parent standard is applied in making the decision. The standard is applied to each child and youth individually, based on the totality of their situation. One tool that can be used by caregivers to help apply critical thinking in making these decisions is by applying the Reasonable & Prudent Parent Standard.

Child Activity Category	Examples of normal Childhood Activities caregivers can approve independently	Examples of childhood activities the local child welfare agency or licensing agency must approve or obtain a court order
<i>(Local child welfare agency or licensing agency approval or new court order is needed any time an activity is in conflict with any court order or supervision/safety plan)</i>		
1. Family Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movies • Community Events such as concert, fair, food truck rodeo • Family Events • Camping • Hiking • Biking using a helmet • Other sporting activities using appropriate protective gear • Amusement park • Fishing (must follow N.C.G.S § 113: Any one over age 16 must have a license) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any of these events or activities lasting over 72 hours • Target Practice (gun, bow and arrow, cross bow at either formal range or private property) must have local child welfare agency approval and be supervised by adult age 18 or over, abiding by all laws.
2. Water Activities (Children must be closely supervised and use appropriate safety equipment for water activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured water activities with trained professional guides and /or lifeguards: river tubing, river rafting, water amusement park, swimming at community recreation pool. • Unstructured water activities with adult supervision: boating wearing a life jacket, swimming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any of these events or activities lasting over 72 hours

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3. Hunting (using gun, bow and arrow)		<p>Must have local child welfare agency approval, should have biological parent approval and would require the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child/youth must take the NC Hunter's Safety Class. • Supervision by a person at least 18 years old or over, who has also taken the above safety course. • Documentation that the requirements are met are provided to the local child welfare agency in advance.
4. Social/Extra-curricular activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps • Field Trips • School related activities such as sporting events and dances • Faith-based activities that are social • Youth organization activities such as Scouts • Participating in sports activities • Community activities • Social activities with peers such as dating, skateboarding, playing in a band, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Practice (gun, bow and arrow, cross bow at either formal range or private property) must have local child welfare agency approval and be supervised by adult age 18 or over, abiding by all laws.
5. Overnight activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight activities outside the direct supervision of the caregiver for a period of over 24 hours and up to 72 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any of these events or activities lasting 72 hours or more consecutively

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6. Motorized Activities	<p>Children and caregivers must comply with all laws and use appropriate protective/safety gear. Any safety courses that are required or available to operate any of the vehicles/equipment listed must be taken.</p> <p>Children <u>riding in/on</u> a motorized vehicle with an adult properly licensed if required including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile • All-terrain vehicle • Jet ski • Tractor • Golf cart • Scooter/Moped • Go-carts • Utility vehicle • Motorcycle <p>State laws must be followed regarding operating motorized equipment or vehicle including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowmobile • All-terrain vehicle (must be 8 years of age to operate and anyone less than 12 years of age may not operate an engine capacity of 70 cubic centimeter displacement or greater; no one less than 16 may operate an engine capacity of 90 cubic centimeter displacement or greater and NO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children may not be passengers on a lawnmower.

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6. Motorized Activities (continued)	<p>ONE under 16 may operate unless they are under the continuous visual supervision of a person 18 years or older per N.C.G.S. § 20-171.15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jet ski (may be 14 years of age with boating safety certification, otherwise must be 16 or older- N.C.G.S. § 75A-13.3) • Tractor (must be 15 to operate N.C.G.S. § 20-10) • Golf cart (must be 16 to operate N.C.G.S. § 153A-245) • Scooter/Moped (No one under age 16 may operate a moped and no license is required N.C.G.S. § 20-10.1) • Go-carts • Utility vehicle • Lawn mower may not be operated by anyone below age 12 • Motorcycle (No one under 16 may acquire a license or learner's permit. No one less than 18 may drive a motorcycle with a passenger. N.C.G.S. § 20-7) 	

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7. Driving	<p>The following persons can be the required second signature for a youth's permit or license:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth's parent or guardian. • A person approved by the parent or guardian. • A person approved by the County DSS Director or Designee. • Specifically for children in custody: Guardian ad litem or attorney advocate; a case worker; or someone else identified by the court of jurisdiction. <p>A youth who is 16 or older may acquire insurance and is responsible for the premium and any damages caused by the youth's negligence. This does not preclude a foster parent from adding a youth to their insurance.</p> <p>A driver's permit is required to "practice" driving in NC and cannot be obtained prior to age 15.</p>	
8. Travel	All travel within the United States lasting less than 72 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All travel lasting more than 72 hours • All travel outside the country
9. Leaving child home alone		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of being left alone (in any situation) needs to be discussed and agreed upon in CFT. Per <u>N.C.G.S. § 14-318</u>, a child under the age of 8 cannot be left home alone.

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10. Employment/Babysitting	<p>Youth 14 years and older and following N.C.G.S. § 95-25.5.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview for employment • Continuation of current employment • Does not interfere with school <p>*Sexually aggressive and physically assaultive youth may not babysit other children.</p>	Youth is 13 years or younger
11. Religious Participation	Attend or not attend a religious service of the child's choice	Notify worker when the child and the biological parent and/or foster parent choices are in conflict.
12. Cell Phone		This is a collaborative decision between the placement provider, the local child welfare agency worker, and the youth.
13. Child's Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions requiring medical treatment for lice and ring worm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the child and biological parent choices are in conflict such as with perms, color, style, relaxers, etc. • Ear piercings must include biological parent in decision. • Permanent or significant changes including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Piercing (Per N.C.G.S. § 14-400 it is illegal for anyone under 18 to receive a piercing (other than the ears) without consent of custodial parent or guardian. ○ Tattoos (Per N.C.G.S. § 14-400 it is illegal for anyone under 18 to receive a tattoo.)

Adapted from Washington State Caregiver Guidelines for Foster Childhood Activities

NC DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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