

*Training Resource on*  
**Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard**  
*(Also includes information on telephone access for foster youth)*

**For Supervisors and Managers**

**Version 1.1 | May, 2007**

---

**The material in this module was written by  
Irene Becker, LCSW, for CalSWEC.**

---

**California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC)**  
University of California, Berkeley  
School of Social Welfare  
120 Haviland Hall  
Berkeley, CA 94720-7400  
Phone: 510-642-9272 Fax: 510-642-8573  
<http://calswec.berkeley.edu>



# REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD TRAINING RESOURCE FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

---

## ABOUT THIS TRAINING RESOURCE

---

**Purpose:**

This brief training resource is designed to disseminate the vital information about the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard to everyone affected by the changes in the law. It is designed with some activities that can be conducted by a trainer, or by a manager or facilitator. The activities last about one hour, and could be used during a regularly scheduled meeting. The training resource can be used to orient supervisors and management, and allow them to pass on the information to their staff. (See the separate curriculum resource for child welfare workers, which is reviewed in segment three.)

**Format:**

The training resource is formatted similarly to other curricula used by the training system in California. It has the following components:

*Learning Objectives* – These are brief, measurable statements of the knowledge, skills, and values that the trainee should get out of the training. The facilitator/supervisor should read them to be clear on what the specific purposes of the training are.

*Title IV-E Competencies* – These competencies guide practice and MSW education in California. They are included to show how this training resource applies to larger practice.

*Lesson Plan* – This is a brief map of the activities included in the training, which maps the Learning Objectives to each segment of the training. It should help the facilitator see how the whole training fits together.

*Training Activities* – These give specific instructions/suggestions for each segment of the training, and indicate what materials are needed, and how to conduct and process the training activities. Facilitators should read these and be familiar with them. This is not a scripted training, so facilitators may want to modify some of the discussion to fit the needs of their particular county or audience.

*Supplemental Handouts* – These are part of a separate document, and are intended for the participants or trainees to use. You should have a copy for each person. *It is highly advisable that you also distribute the materials for the group to review prior to the*

*training.* You may want to print the handouts for each segment on different color paper to make it easier to distinguish them during the training. It is vital that the facilitator knows what all of the participants are using. Again, these may be modified for use with a particular group of trainees or a particular county. *All-County Letters (ACLs)* and *All-County Information Notices (ACINs)* are included in separate .pdf-format documents. These are the official information released by the state to the counties, and are not modified.

---

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

---

### **Knowledge:**

- K1.** The trainee will be able to identify current organizational barriers and solutions to the barriers in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard for the youth in out-of-home placements.

### **Skills:**

- S1.** The trainee will be able to articulate the reasonable and prudent parent standard for out-of-home caregivers and provide two examples for training workers on the reasonable and prudent parent standard.
- S2.** The trainee will be able to develop two organizational strategies to implement the reasonable and prudent parent standard for child welfare workers and out-of-home caregivers.

### **Values:**

- V1.** The trainee will value the role of out-of-home caregivers in making reasonable and prudent parent decisions about the child or youth in their care.

---

## TITLE IV-E CURRICULUM COMPETENCIES

---

*The Title IV-E MSW competencies were developed for the M.S.W. specialization in public child welfare in California, a two-year, full-time graduate program. The MSW competencies may overlap with the common core competencies, but are primarily designed for a full MSW program. Learning objectives and competencies in the common core support the MSW Title IV-E competencies, but not all of the IV-E material can be delivered during an in-service training session. MSW Title IV-E competencies may therefore be linked to multiple topic areas of the common core.*

Student works collaboratively with biological families, foster families, and kin networks, involving them in assessment and planning, and supporting them in coping with special stresses and difficulties. (6.6)

Student is able to identify agency and legislative policies and procedures that create barriers to the growth and development of children and families. (7.4)

Student understands how political activities and regulatory, legislative, and judicial processes at local, state, and national levels influence agency policies, procedures, and programs. (8.2)

Student understands how leader/managers use the collaborative process for the purpose of planning, formulating policy, and implementing services. (8.3)

---

## CONTEXT

---

As part of the reform efforts in child welfare in California, the Legislature and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) have spearheaded legislative and regulatory changes that are designed to enhance one of the Adoptions and Safe Families Act goal, that of child well-being. These changes seek to provide the caregivers with more latitude in decision-making, and align the state through law and regulations with child welfare best practices.

This training resource is designed for managers and supervisors to:

- Define the reasonable and prudent parent standard as defined in All-County Letters;
- Identify current practice and organizational barriers that impact the implementation of the reasonable and prudent parent standard for youth in out-of-home care;
- Develop organizational strategies to implement the reasonable and prudent parent standard with child welfare workers and out-of-home caregivers.

As a statewide training resource, this material was developed by the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), with the guidance of the County Welfare Directors Association's (CWDA) Children's Committee, the Statewide Training and Education Committee (STEC), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

# REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD TRAINING RESOURCE FOR SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS

---

## LESSON PLAN

---

Topic/Time	Learning Objective	Methodology
<p><b>Segment 1</b> <b>20 minutes</b></p> <p><b>Defining the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard</b></p>	<p>S1 The trainee will be able to articulate the reasonable and prudent parent standard for out-of-home caregivers and provide two examples for training workers on the reasonable and prudent parent standard.</p>	<p><b>Activity 1:</b> Facilitated Discussion - Defining the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard</p> <p><b>Handouts:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The What and Why of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard</li> <li>2. Caregiver Information Sheet: Extracurricular, Enrichment And Social Activities</li> <li>3. Caregiver Information Sheet: Use of Occasional Short-Term Babysitters</li> <li>4. What Are Reasonable Decisions?</li> </ol> <p><i>ACLs and ACINs may also be distributed.</i></p>

Topic/Time	Learning Objective	Methodology
<p><b>Segment 2</b> <b>30 minutes</b></p> <p><b>Creating action plans for change</b></p>	<p>K1 The trainee will be able to identify current organizational barriers and solutions to the barriers in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard for the youth in out-of-home placements.</p> <p>S2 The trainee will be able to develop two organizational strategies to implement the reasonable and prudent parent standard for child welfare workers and out-of-home caregivers.</p> <p>V1 The trainee will value involvement and collaboration with out-of-home caregivers in determining how the reasonable and prudent parent standard will be applied uniquely for each youth in out-of-home care.</p>	<p><b>Activity 2:</b> Current Agency Practice and What Needs to be Changed</p> <p><b>Handout:</b> 5. Action Plan for Changing Practice</p>

Topic/Time	Learning Objective	Methodology
<p><b>Segment 3</b> <b>10 minutes</b></p> <p><b>Review of Child Welfare Training Resource</b> (NOTE: If you are not using the supervisors to provide the information to the child welfare workers, then you can allocate more time to the other segments of the training, and inform the supervisors about how their workers will be trained.)</p>	<p>S2. The trainee will be able to develop two organizational strategies to implement the reasonable and prudent parent standard for child welfare workers and out-of-home caregivers.</p>	<p><b>Activity 3:</b> Review of materials for training workers on the reasonable and prudent parent standard</p> <p><b>Handout:</b> Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Training Resource for Child Welfare Workers</p> <p><i>NOTE: The same handouts are used for both this resource and the one aimed at Child Welfare Workers.</i></p>

## TRAINING ACTIVITY FOR SEGMENT 1 DEFINING THE REASONABLE AND PRUDENT PARENT STANDARD

**Approximate time:** 20 minutes

**Preparation:**

- It is recommended that you distribute the handouts prior to the training, so that people can review them and be knowledgeable.
- You should also have copies available, in case people don't bring the copies. You will also be reviewing the material, since some of the people will not have reviewed it.

**Materials:**

- Easel and chart pad paper, markers, tape (optional)
- Handout One: *The What and Why of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*
- Handout Two: *Caregiver Information Sheet: Extracurricular, Enrichment, and Social Activities, and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*
- Handout Three: *Caregiver Information Sheet: Use of Occasional Short-Term Babysitters and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*
- Handout Four: *The Prudent Parent Standard: What are Reasonable Decisions?*

**Training Activity:**

- Explain the purpose of the training.
- Provide trainees with Handout One: *The What and Why of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard*. This handout also includes information on the new regulations on telephone access for foster children. Briefly review the key points of the handout, including the definitions.
- Ask the group how this change in law might change practice, and chart their answers on note paper if it is available.
- Point out that the terms “Reasonable” and “Prudent” are inherently subjective. This will be the challenge in implementing the changes.
- Distribute *Handout Four: The Prudent Parent Standard: What are Reasonable Decisions?* The answer key is provided below with suggested answers.
- Divide the group into several small groups, and have them discuss 2-3 of the scenarios, depending on the size of your group. Have them report out on their answers, as below.
- Handouts Two and Three (*The Caregiver Information Sheets*) can be provided/referred to at the close of the discussion. These are an additional resource for child welfare workers and the agency to use to work with caregivers and provide them with the information.

**Processing the Activity:**

- Ask them if they disagreed on any of the answers. If someone volunteers that they did, have them explain what they were unsure about. Review the answer key with them as one suggested answer.
- Make sure that the group understands the intent of the legislature to normalize the experience of foster care and empower foster parents to make routine decisions for care.
- Under the statute (AB 408 and SB 358), the caregiver is empowered to decide what activities foster youth may participate in and to select occasional, short-term babysitters. It is important to note social workers may collaborate and assist the caregivers in the decisions that they make as prudent parents, but do not monitor caregivers in making reasonable prudent parent decisions.
- The ACL's and ACIN that are cited in this handout should also be available for further clarification.

*End of Activity*

---

**HANDOUT FOUR:**  
**The Prudent Parent Standard: What are Reasonable Decisions?**  
**Trainer/Facilitator Key**

**Introduction:** Under the statute (AB 408 and SB 358), the caregiver is empowered to decide what activities foster youth may participate in and to select occasional, short-term babysitters. It is important to note social workers may collaborate and assist the caregivers in the decisions that they make as prudent parents, but do not monitor caregivers in making reasonable prudent parent decisions. The scenarios below offer points of discussion for caregivers, social workers and supervisors.

Review the caregiver scenarios and rate the following scenarios on what is:

**Red** – This is not a reasonable decision to be made by out of home caregivers and does not fall within the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**Yellow** – This is a decision that should be discussed with the child welfare worker.

**Green** – Falls within the reasonable and prudent standard.

1. A foster parent would like to get a babysitter because the foster parent wants to go out to a concert. The foster parent contacts his sister and asks if she would babysit two foster children, ages 6 and 4. The foster children have been in the home for six months and have some difficulty getting to sleep in the evenings.

**Green** –The foster parent has authority to make a prudent parent decision about whether his sister is appropriate to babysit his foster children without agency oversight. The foster parent is to **make an effort** to leave information about the children's' emotional, behavioral, medical, or physical conditions, if any, necessary to care for the children while he is at the concert. In this situation, the foster parent may decide that the children's difficulty going to sleep is important behavioral information to pass on to the babysitter. The foster parent must also make an effort to leave emergency contact information that is valid during the time he is gone, and any medication that should be given to the children while he is away at the concert.

2. A 16-year-old in a group home would like to attend a one-day ski class with his high school. The trip requires a permission slip be signed. The 16-year-old has been in the group home for three months and has been doing well.

**Red** – Group homes do not fall within the prudent parent standard. Check with your current agency practice about a group home signing permission slips. Consider if the agency child welfare worker can sign.

3. A relative/kin caregiver would like to take a three-day trip with his niece, age 2, and nephew, 4, who have been placed with them by the court, along with their own child, age 10, to Disneyland.

**Green** – Meets the reasonable and prudent parent standard as long as children do not have developmental/physical/behavioral problems that preclude the niece and nephew from going.

4. A 15-year-old would like to call her friend that is across town. It is a long distance call and the foster mother won't allow any long distance calls.

**Red** – This hypothetical does not fall within the prudent parent standard law. However, it does, under current CCL regulations state foster and kinship parents can put reasonable restrictions on the use of the telephone in their home. Dependent children have a right to make and receive confidential telephone calls and receive unopened mail unless a court order says they can't. Caregivers can ask for reimbursement for long distance telephone calls and can decide not to allow the child to keep making long distance calls if previous long distance bills have not been paid. Caregivers have authority to make sure that the child's use of the telephone does not infringe on the rights of others and does not tie up the telephone during emergencies.

5. A child's attorney calls the child welfare worker to complain that a foster family should have gotten the court's permission to allow a 10-year-old to participate in skateboarding tournaments. The foster family has two other children ages 7, 9, besides the 10-year-old. All of the children ride skateboards.

**Green** –The activity has its risks, but if developmentally appropriate, falls within the reasonable and prudent parent standard of decisions on extracurricular activities. The child welfare worker may want to work with the attorney around the reasonable and prudent parent standard. The attorney for the child should be referred to WIC section 362.04 and 362.05.

6. Foster parents go on a getaway weekend and leave two foster children, ages 12 and 15, with the foster aunt and uncle and their children.

**Red** – Currently the standard is for no more than 24 consecutive hours. In order for this to be permissible, the foster aunt and uncle would have to have appropriate clearances.

7. A relative hires an evening babysitter for two foster children, ages 4 and 9. The relative does not disclose that these children are foster children, in order to avoid stigmatizing them.

**Red** –. The foster parent must leave specific information with the babysitter under the law. The information is:

- Information about the child’s emotional, behavioral, medical or physical condition, if any, necessary to provide care for the child during the time the child is being supervised by the babysitter.
- Any medication that must be given to the child during the time the child is being supervised by the babysitter.
- Emergency contact information that is valid during the time the child is being supervised by the babysitter.

There is no explicit requirement that the babysitter be told the child is a foster child. Also, the caregiver should not disclose more information than necessary to the babysitter. For example, the caregiver should not give the babysitter the child’s entire Health and Education Passport.

8. A report comes into the hotline that a daycare provider has hired a babysitter to watch the children in daycare while the daycare provider attends a medical appointment.

**Red** – The reasonable and prudent parent standard does not apply to day care providers.

9. A 17-year-old in foster care would like to get a work permit.

**Green- Yellow** – If the 17-year-old is capable developmentally the caregiver can sign for a work permit.

10. A foster parent asks her 17-year-old daughter to watch her foster children, ages 4 and 8, for 90 minutes so that she can get her hair done. The daughter knows about the children and their behavior and knows how to reach the foster mother in an emergency.

**Green- Yellow** – The age of the babysitter is not defined in the ACL. This may need clarification from the agency to caregivers. Developmentally, unless otherwise indicated, 17-year-olds are expected to take on care giving tasks in preparation for adulthood.

## TRAINING ACTIVITY FOR SEGMENT 2 CHANGING AGENCY PRACTICE

**Approximate time:** 30 minutes

**Materials:**

- Handout Five: *Action Plan for Changing Practice*
- Easel, chart pads, markers, tape.

**Training Activity:**

- Provide copies of the action plan to all participants.
- This activity is nearly identical to the one in the training resource for child welfare workers, but should focus on *agency* stakeholders rather than stakeholders for particular children and families.
- Have the group brainstorm all of stakeholders who need to know the information. Chart their answers on the chart pad if it is available.
- When you finish a list, again divide the group and have them fill out the rest of the action plan for 1 or 2 of the identified stakeholders.
- When the groups have completed this, have them report out briefly. They may not know who should complete particular tasks, so you may have to defer some of the decisions for the management team to sort through later.
- Have the volunteer make one clean copy based on all of the groups' answers, which will serve as the action plan. Again, this may require approval by management.
- When the action plan is complete, put at the bottom of the page a date that is six weeks out from the day of training (or at the next regularly scheduled meeting). An option would be to review the action plan in six weeks and evaluate how the practice of the reasonable and prudent parent standard is going among various stakeholders.
- Additional action planning may be warranted.

**Processing This Activity:**

- This is an opportunity to discuss with managers and supervisors any of the current conditions with various stakeholders.
- Some potential subjects include:
  - Foster parents and their role as a team member
  - Group homes and their involvement in overall case planning
  - Attorneys and their role with families
- Some potential questions include:
  - Are various stakeholders “on board” with best practices in child welfare?
  - What are some examples of these best practices?

- What are some of the barriers that remain in involving stakeholders in best practices?
- If the supervisors are going to facilitate the training resource for child welfare workers, then you can let them know that there is a similar exercise in that training resource for workers to look at the stakeholders *for their caseloads*.

*End of Activity*

---

## **TRAINING ACTIVITY FOR SEGMENT 3 REVIEW OF TRAINING MODULE FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKERS**

**Approximate time:** 10 minutes

**Materials:**

- Training Module: Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard Training Module for Child Welfare Workers

**Training Activity:**

- The trainer/facilitator should give handouts and module to the participants.
- Briefly review materials and ask supervisors to schedule the training module for workers.
- Assign a review date with supervisors for the completion of the training module for workers and for issues that have arisen during these training sessions.
- Ask them if they have any questions about the materials. Point out that they have just completed all of the activities in the training in some form.

*End of Activity*

---