Child Welfare Leadership Program
Class IV
Normalcy Training
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.
Topic One - Objective: Describe the Need for Normalcy Training

- Why is Normalcy important for Youth in out-of-home care
- Why is important to develop a Normalcy or Teen Plan for their activities
- Why is important to have the Youth involved in the staffings, court hearings and plan development
- Why do we need to include everyone in Normalcy
Video

A Journey to 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.
Legal References for Normalcy

FL Statute – Chapter 409.1451

FL Administrative Code
- 65C-13 Substitute Care of Children
  - Updated 4/6/2008 to reflect the changes 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
NORMALCY FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

An emphasis on preparing youth for independent Living (as referenced in Florida Statute 409.1451)

Agency Responsibilities include:

- Providing youth the opportunities to participate in life skills in their foster home placement & communities – being reasonable & 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.

- Supporting opportunities for participation in age-appropriate activities

- Working closely with youth to set early achievement & career goals for educational & employment experiences.
With this focus on Normalcy...

Florida Statute 409.1451 mandated agencies to:

- Develop list of age-appropriate activities and responsibilities for older youth.

- Provide training to address issues of older children in foster care – including areas of educational, vocational, & employment opportunities.

- Develop a written plan that outlines the authority of the foster parents/caregivers & identify 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 documents are explained and written in language the youth can understand.
How Can We Meet These Mandates

• Providing age-appropriate activities and responsibilities for youth. *(These were created by the State Youth Advisory Board in March 2003 – copy included in Resource Guide)*

• Providing the ‘Rights and Expectations for Children and Youth in Shelter or Foster Care’ Pamphlet to all youth. *(This was created and provided by DCF and it’s Community Partners – contact the Office of Family Safety, Independent Living Coordinator in Tallahassee for copies – copy included in Resource Guide)*
How Can We Meet These Mandates (continue...)

- Develop a written plan that outlines and identified age-appropriate activities for the youth. *(Copies of Normalcy and Teen Plans have been provided to you in your Resource Guide)*

- Educate and collaborate with the Youth, Caregivers and all Stakeholders involved in the care of the youth.
**Topic Three – Objective:**
Identify Primary Stakeholders
Roles and Responsibilities

Incorporate the Independent Living Assessment Results into the Normalcy and Teen Plans
“Pre-Independent Living”
FL Admin Code 65C-28.009(5)

Eligibility: youth ages 13 but not yet 15 yrs in the custody of the Department of Children & Families

Assessment to determine service needs -
An Assessment shall be completed within 30 days after his/her 13th birthday or within 60 days after the court enters order placing child in the custody of the department.
- Some agencies use the Ansell-Casey Assessment; although it does not mandate use of a particular assessment

Services for “Pre-Independent Living” eligible youth
- skills training
- educational field trips
- conference opportunities

Annual Independent Living staffings held with a focus on the youth’s “career/educational path” – crucial that the youth attend this staffing.
Life Skills Services
FL Admin Code 65C-28.009(6)

Eligibility: youth age 15 but not yet 18 yrs

Assessment to determine service needs -
An Assessment shall be completed within 30 days after 15th birthday or within 30 days after court enters an order placing child in the custody of department.
– Some agencies use the Daniel Memorial Assessment; although it does not mandate use of a particular assessment

CASE PLANNING: for youth 16 & 17 yrs the case plan shall include appropriate independent living services.

Staffings: held at least once every 6 months – crucial for the youth to attend this staffing.

YOUTH 16 & 17 yrs old – may be eligible for Subsidized Independent Living
– the youth must be formally evaluated
THE EDUCATIONAL & CAREER PLAN

A CASE WORK FOCUS FOR YOUTH, AGES 13 – 14

**FL Statute 409.1451**

*Children who have reached the age of 13 years, the child’s case plan shall include an educational & career plan based upon abilities & interests of each child.*

- Reviewed at each judicial review hearing as part of the case plan.

**FL Admin Code 65C-28.009 Adolescent Services**

*Beginning at age 14, upon entering 9th grade or upon entering licensed out of home care past the age of 14, whichever occurs first, with the assistance of foster parents/caregiver and the Services Worker, shall set early achievement and career goals.*

- Coordinate involvement with school if child is enrolled in ESE program.
- Incorporate into the Case Plan

**NOTE:**

- The Independent Living staffing form has been updated to incorporate the educational & career plan.
- Attach the Indep Living staffing form to the case plan
Youth have a right to attend and participate in court hearings.

Agency has responsibility to ensure arrangements are made for interested youth to attend court hearings.

FL Statute Ch. 39.701(6)(a) – references
FL Administrative Code: 65C-28.009(9)(a)

“SPECIAL JUDICIAL REVIEW”:
- held within 90 days after he/she turns 17 yrs, & within the month that begins the 6 month period before the 18th birthday
- A plan for the youth’s transition into adulthood shall be outlined in writing (can be done with a detailed JRSSR).
- The transition plan (from the 17 yr old staffing) shall be filed with the court.
- The youth needs to attend and provided a copy of the Judicial Review.
IDENTIFIED

STAKEHOLDERS
Who Needs to Know About Normalcy

- Hotline
- CPI
- Care Managers
- Foster Parents/Group Homes
- Child Placing Agencies/Licensing Agencies
- Youth
- School
- Child Legal Services
- Guardian-ad-Litem
- Birth Parents
Role and Responsibilities of Primary Stakeholders

- Youth
- Caregivers
- Child Welfare Professionals
Role of the Youth

Understanding the importance of connections and stability they can obtain and maintain in their lives prior and during the intervention and to participate in healthy childhood activities and experiences.

This includes youth with physical and/or mental disabilities.
Out-of-Home Caregivers
Role ...

- FAC 65C-13.029
- …shall provide the child with opportunities for normal growth and development..
- …opportunities to develop skills and interests through participation in school and community activities.
- …assist the children in performing tasks and developing skills which will promote their independence and the ability to care for themselves.
How do Caregivers Do This...

- Age appropriate tasks/responsibilities
- Florida Statute 409.1451(4)(b)1 – Life Skills Services
  - Banking, Budgeting, Interviewing Skills, Parenting Skills, Time Management or Organizational Skills, Educational Support, Employment Training, Counseling, etc.
Role of Child Welfare Professional

- ...to provide support and guidance to the caregiver and youth in preparing for independent living
- ...to invite caregivers and youth to staffings to discuss and plan for opportunities for ‘normalcy’
- ...involve the caregivers and youth in the development of the ‘plan’
Requirements of Child Welfare Professionals

• **Requirement:** Develop a written plan for each youth in foster care providing the opportunity to participate in age appropriate activities and the authority to make decisions granted to the foster parent or caregiver.

• **Participants:** Foster Parent/Caregiver, the child and the Child Welfare Professional.

• **Time Frame:** Quarterly (Plan must be updated every 3 months)
Other ways to Normalcy ‘Pictures’

- FAC 65C-13.029 – ‘children in an out-of-home care shall be encouraged and assisted in participating in activities such as having his or her picture taken for publication in a newspaper or yearbook…..’

- There is no reason a foster child cannot appear in a picture with other children at school, or even individually as long as the child’s identity as a foster child is kept confidential!

- So – don’t say ‘Mary Smith, Foster Care Child’ – simple state ‘Mary Smith’.
‘Dating, Outings and Activities’

- FAC 65C-029 – ‘...knowledge of where and with whom the child is staying and the type of supervision and care the child shall be receiving before approving an outing or overnight activity...’

- **Background Checks** for dating, outings and activities with friends, their families and schools are church groups are **NOT** necessary for participation in normal school or community activities!

- Caregiver is primary decision maker – use ‘common sense’. 
‘Allowances’

• 65C-029 – ‘children in licensed out-of-home care shall receive an allowance not less frequently than each month…’

• A portion of the foster home or group care board rates paid includes a required amount for an allowance, clothing and incidentals
‘Learning to Drive a Car’

- FAC 65C-.029 – ‘caregiver shall support the child’s efforts to learn to drive a car, obtain a learner’s permit and driver’s license as appropriate for their age, maturity level, and availability of insurance....’

- Intended to allow for the ‘opportunity’ – there are financial considerations that may make it difficult to assist the child.
Development of the Normalcy or Teen Plan for ALL Youth in Licensed Out-of-Home Care
AGE APPROPRIATE PLAN aka ‘Normalcy Plan or Teen Plan’

FOCUS – age appropriate activities for youth & authority of the foster parent/caregiver

“THE PLAN” -
- Is developed with foster parent/caregiver, child, & case manager
- Includes specific goals & objectives
- To be reviewed and updated no less than quarterly
- Not required to be filed with the court

Note: “foster parents or caregivers are not held responsible under administrative rules or laws pertaining to state licensure or have their licensure status jeopardized as a result of the actions of a child engaged in the approved age-appropriate activities as specified in the written plan.”

-Section 409.1451(3)(a)
Topic Four – Objective: How to put the requirements into Case Work Practice
QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?
Resources

- Normalcy Training Resource Guide
- The Center for the Advancement of Children Welfare Practices
- Florida Statute Chapter 39
- Florida Statute Chapter 409.1451
- Florida Administrative Codes
  - 65C-13
  - 65C-28
  - 65C-29
  - 65C-31
THE END

THANK YOU !!!