

The logo for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, featuring the word "Ohio" in a bold, dark red font. The letter "O" is a circle with a red outline, and the letters "hio" are solid dark red. A vertical grey line is positioned to the right of the "O".

**Ohio**

**Department of  
Job and Family Services**

John R. Kasich, Governor  
Cynthia C. Dungey, Director

Office of Families  
and Children

**Welcome**

**Office of Families & Children**

**Normalcy Survey Results**



# **Normalcy Survey Origins**

**House Bill 213**

**Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening  
Families Act (PL 113-183)**

# Normalcy Survey Origins

- **Include requirements to increase normalcy for children in the foster care system.**
- **Using a “reasonable and prudent parent standard” when making parental decisions**
- **Qualified immunity for a foster caregiver**
- **Specify who can and should make parenting decision and offer protection to those persons**

# Normalcy Survey

**132 agencies participated in the survey**

- **56% respondents were from PCSAs**
- **38% respondents represented PNAs**
- **4% respondents were from PCPAs**

**What activities are foster youth permitted to participate in?**

# Normalcy Survey

**PCSAs and PNAs/PCPAs all rated the following activities as the most allowable:**

- **Community involvement (91%)**
- **Complete soft skills in home (89%)**
- **Extracurricular activities at school (88%)**
- **Obtain employment (86%)**
- **Travel out of state with foster parents (68%)**

# Normalcy Survey

**PCSAs and PNAs/PCPAs all rated the following activities as the least allowable:**

- **Sleepover with a friend (23%)**
- **Picture in school publications (23%)**
- **Obtain a temporary driver's permit (20%)**
- **Get a haircut without permission (20%)**
- **Obtain a driver's license (10%)**
- **Ride in cars with licensed teen drivers (9%)**

# Normalcy Survey

**Special permission is required for many activities and (according to PCSAs) based upon:**

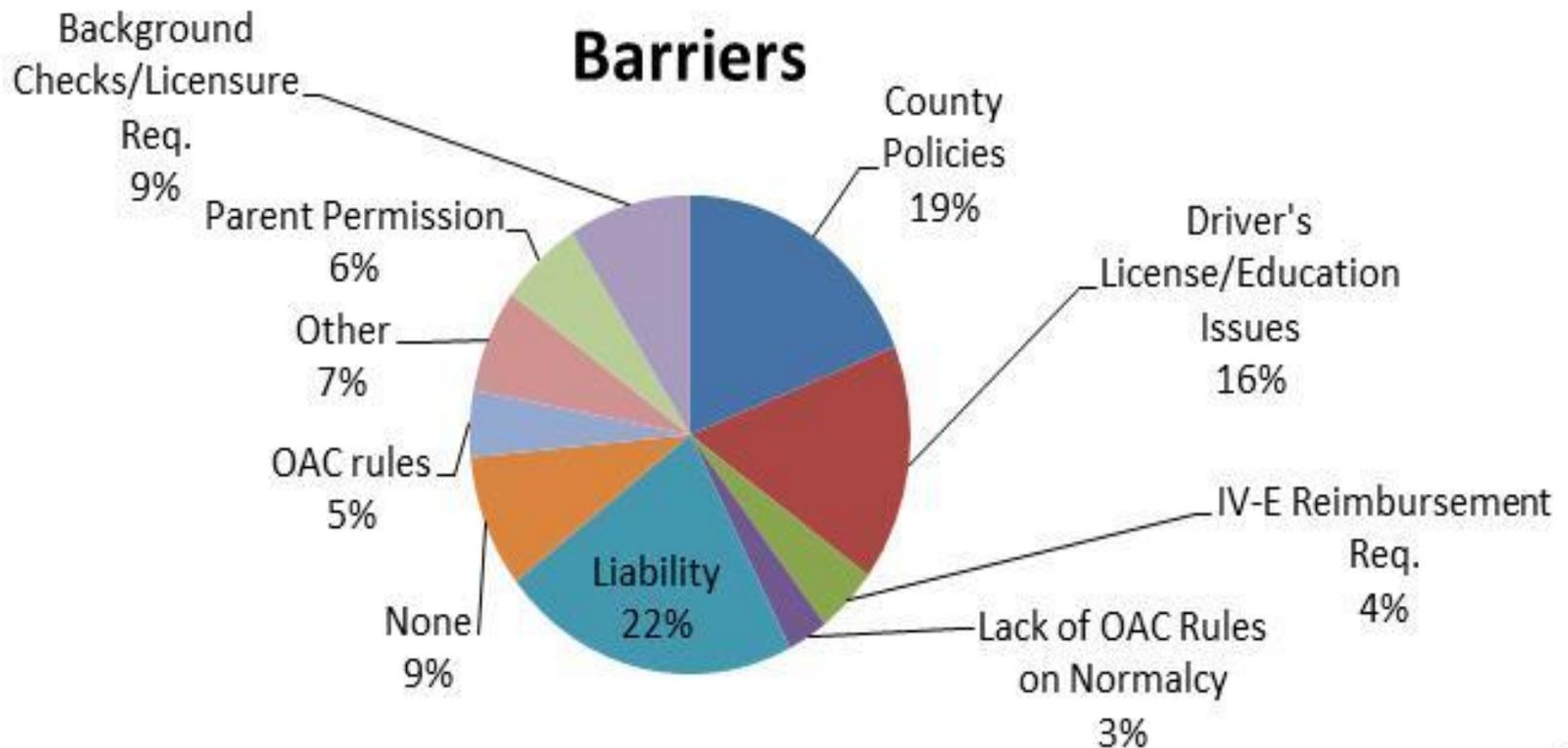
- **Needs of the child**
- **Behavior and development of the child**
- **Consent of parent**
- **Background checks on adults**
- **Risk level of the activity**

# Current Policy

- **Allowable Activities 64% driven by agency policy**
- **Who's responsible for cost 65% driven by policy**
- **Foster youth receiving allowances 42%**
- **Specific criteria must be met for approval 50%**
- **Overall 55% of all agencies have at least one normalcy policy**

# Normalcy Survey

Barriers to normalcy at both the state and local level



# Feedback from Youth

- Driver's license issues
- Sleepovers
- Unsupervised time
- Needing permission (from caseworker) and background checks on adults for normal activities
- Want to be treated like other kids



# Feedback from Caregivers

- Not empowered to make decisions
- Permission issues (custodial agency and birth parents)
- Liability Concerns when it comes to allowing youth to participate in activities

# Training for Agency Staff

- The majority of agencies (61%) report staff have not been train on normalcy
- 78% of the agencies who responded indicated an interest in receiving training and/or technical assistance from ODJFS on normalcy



# Driver's Education for youth

- 88% of agencies would be supportive of a requirement that all youth receive driver's education prior to emancipating from care
- Those who were not supportive indicated they would support based on child's functioning and/or did not want it to be a requirement for all youth

# Misconceptions

- For a child in foster care to stay overnight at a friend's house, the adults living or staying in the friend's house must undergo a background check.
- **Reality:** The friend's parents are not considered alternate caregivers and do not need a background check. Only foster and adoptive parents, their adult household members, and staff at residential facilities are required to undergo background checks.

# Misconceptions

- Children in foster care are not allowed to attend functions without adult supervision.
- **Reality:** Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rule 5101:2-7-11 states that foster caregivers should encourage children in foster care to participate in community, school, recreational and cultural heritage activities that are appropriate to their age and functioning. Furthermore, children in foster care should be allowed privileges and assigned responsibilities similar to other family members of a similar age and functioning level. However, foster caregivers must obtain prior written approval from the recommending agency before the child can be left unattended. OAC 5101:2-7-08(D) requires the written approval to specify the period of time the child is permitted to be unsupervised.

# Misconceptions

- A birth parent's wishes must always be followed if she/he disagrees with an activity involving her/his child.
- **Reality:** Birth parents' involvement with children in foster care is critical, and the parents maintain certain rights regarding their children. However, with the exceptions of visitation, and cultural or religious practices, OAC rules do not directly address parental rights regarding age appropriate social, scholastic and enrichment activities for children in foster care. Agencies and substitute caregivers should be sensitive to birth parents' input. They also should remember that normalcy activities cannot override case plans or other court-ordered requirements. For example, if a foster family vacation would cause a child to miss a scheduled visit with a birth parent, the agency and foster parent need to work with the birth parent to see if an alternate visit can be arranged.



# Conclusion