



Legislative Link

A legislative update provided by the United Way of Florida

Mid-Point Success: Quality Parenting for Children in Foster Care

Championed by Sen. Nancy Detert (R-Venice) and Rep. Ben Albritton (R-Wauchula), the *Quality Parenting for Children in Foster Care Act* attempts to normalize – to the greatest extent possible – the living situation for foster children. How? ... By allowing foster parents to act more like “parents”, rather than having to jump through unnecessary hoops so their foster children can play sports, participate in school clubs, go to school functions, and much more.

Today, if a foster child wants to play lacrosse (for example), the child, foster parent, **and** case manager must develop and sign a “written plan that outlines the age-appropriate activities in which the child may participate and the authority of the caregiver to permit participation in the activities.” Wow.

The Quality Parenting Act replaces the suffocating “plan” with a newly-created “reasonable and prudent parent” standard. Foster parents will be shielded from liability if they consider the following issues when making decisions about extracurricular activities for children in their care:

- the child’s age, maturity, and developmental level;
- potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the activity;
- the best interest of the child, based on the information known to the caregiver;
- the importance of encouraging the child’s emotional and developmental growth;
- the importance of providing the most family-like living experience to the child as possible; and
- the behavioral history of the child and the child’s ability to safely participate in the activity.

Mid-session kudos to Sen. Nancy Detert and Rep. Ben Albritton, and the unanimous Florida Legislature that passed the “Quality Parenting for Children in Foster Care Act”.

And high praise to Guardian ad Litem Executive Director Alan Abramowitz, Florida’s Children First, and Florida Youth Shine for continuing their remarkable efforts to bring common sense and reality into the system.

For additional information, please contact
the United Way of Florida at: (850) 488-8276.

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