



September 1, 2024

The Honorable Jim Pillen  
Governor of Nebraska  
P.O. Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509

The Honorable Ben Hansen  
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee  
Nebraska Legislature  
P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Ms. Deb Minardi  
Probation Administrator  
State of Nebraska  
P.O. Box 98910  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Ms. Sage Leis  
Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Committee  
c/o Nebraska Children's Commission  
1225 L Street, Suite 401  
Lincoln, NE 68508

Subject: Normalcy Plans and Annual Reports

Dear Governor Pillen, Chairman Hansen, Ms. Minardi, and Ms. Leis:

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 43-4706, attached are normalcy plans for all childcare institutions currently under contract with the department and all Youth Residential Treatment Centers (YRTC), as well as annual normalcy reports for all institutions that have accepted child placements. The institutions are as follows: Care-RIE, Cedars Youth Services, Child Saving Institute, Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska (CAPWIN), Father Flanagan's Boys' Home, Norfolk Group Home, Omaha Home for Boys, Independence Rising, Women in Community Services (WIC), YRTC-Hastings, YRTC-Kearney, and YRTC-Lincoln.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alyssa L. Bish".

Alyssa Bish Ph.D.  
Director, Division of Children and Family Services

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Father Flanagan's Boy's Home

Report Author:

Jennie Louderback

Author's Title:

Program Support Services Coordinator

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Contract Date:

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Plan Date:

October 30, 2023

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

Boys Town does everything possible to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent when youth must be placed outside of their homes. In addition to the number of items that are discussed below that break down these barriers, we also ensure that youth and families are provided with information and are aware of what the program entails during the admissions process. Each youth and their family/team members will sit through an admission meeting where program details are explained and questions are asked. This provides youth, families, team members, and our family teachers and consultants an opportunity to get to know each other and the program in person. This process continues during placement as youth and families attend team meetings to discuss how youth are doing in the program, activities they are involved in as well as questions or concerns. Although these meetings occur throughout placement, it is not the only opportunity for these discussions. A very important part of our program is self-government and self-determination. This element occurs at a youth level, in homes, on clubs/teams, in classrooms, and in the community. A few important examples of self-government are youth advocating for themselves or others, reporting safety issues, encouraging peers, and holding each other accountable. We value our kids learning to speak up for what is right, making requests and developing their citizenship skills in all environments. We continue to utilize technology to help limit barriers. Each home is equipped with an iPad to help youth maintain face to face conversations with families members in addition to phone calls and visits. Utilizing technology for team meetings has also increased opportunities for families to be involved in team meetings by providing them opportunities to participate in person, via phone, or face to face through technology resources. Boys Town staff members teach youth social skills, ensure they continue to go to school, and work with youth and families to develop individualized, skill focused service plans that address behavior problems areas. Boys Town focuses on meeting educational, medical, psychological, emotional and behavioral need of the youth in care.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

The Boys Town Model allows youth to have daily contact as well as ongoing visits with family. We encourage family to come to campus to attend youth sporting events, youth activities and more throughout the year to help build and maintain relationships. Youth are able to access developmentally appropriate technology within their school and home settings including: iPads in each home so youth are able to video friends and family, increased technology in the classroom and at home for educational needs, and access to dedicated space and technology for therapy visits completed virtually. Our new Education Center is equipped with cutting-edge science labs, and our classrooms are equipped with innovative technology and welcoming learning environments. We continue to meet educational needs in a variety of ways not only through the typical classroom settings, but through our Career Center and Life Skills Development programs. Our Career Center offers courses such as: Certified Nursing Assistant courses, culinary arts, small motor, graphic design, communication and media sciences, constructive, automotive, and welding courses. Students have the opportunities to develop skills they can bring into jobs, careers, or have a jump start on further their education path. The Boys Town Behavioral Health Clinic as well as Boys Town Hospital and Clinic located right on campus allow youth to get their healthcare needs met. Family Teachers within the home ensure that they set up youth for success by incorporating a family like, sustainable routine. If youth know what to expect on a day in, day out basis, they are able to relax as they know what to expect. Youth engage in typical day to day activities that you would see in any home such as playing games together, watching TV, cooking and cleaning together and having family meals together.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

Boys Town continues to use an individualized case plan for each youth that documents their progress in the program as well as their participation in multiple activities. Youth have a voice in these service plans as they complete Daily Skill Reviews that allow structured time to talk with Family Teachers and Assistant Family Teachers about what has gone positively with their day and what they are going to work on the next day. Youth are encouraged to be involved in appropriate activities as these activities help them practice skills in multiple settings that will only help them be more successful. Team Meetings, held monthly, allow youth and all members of the youth's service team to look at the youth's progress as well as discuss activities the youth is in or activities with which the youth may want to be involved. Services always focus on promoting positive, pro-social behaviors and building self-esteem and skill development and are designed to be appropriate to the age, gender, cultural heritage, developmental and functional level of each child. The service planning process programs include: pre-admission, admission team meeting, preliminary service plan, standard and specialized assessments, initial team meeting, service plan goals, service plan, skill reviews, regular service plan reports, and discharge summary/aftercare plan. As discussed previously, we have an ever-growing list of activities in which youth can participate. Youth are also able to have jobs on and off campus to help create normalcy.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

Boys Town has documents to help support these policies that are found in all levels of care. Documents used in the Intervention and Assessment Program, Enhanced Family Home Program, and Family Home Program are as follows:

- Promoting Normalcy for Youth in Care
- Parent or Legal Guardian Rights- Enhanced Family Home, Family Home
- Parent or Legal Guardian Rights- Intervention and Assessment
- Employee to Service Recipient Ratios
- Youth Rights- Enhanced Family Home, Family Home
- Youth Rights- Intervention and Assessment

Policies are regularly updated and changes are made as needed to promote normalcy for youth.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

Boys Town staff, both in homes and in the schools are aware of the activities with which youth can be involved. These activities remain the same as those discussed below. In order to promote and support access, activities are regularly discussed in the schools/homes/family meetings. Opportunities are also announced in the school and sent out via email to make students aware of opportunities in which they may be interested. Some activities include: Band, Baseball, basketball, board game club, book club, cheer, chess club, craft club, cross country, drama club, flags, football, golf club, HOSA, Manga club, meditation club, mindfulness club, NHS, National music honors society, peer ministry, ROTC, science club, small engines club, soccer, softball, Spanish club, STEM/Robotics club, student council, swim team, track, voices, volleyball, walking club, wrestling, writing club. This list is ever-growing!

It is important to note that youth can also have jobs both on and off the Boys Town Campus.

We have a youth support team that works with donors in the community to regularly secure donations of tickets to various events in the community, including sporting events, community theater, concerts and more. Boys Town hosts a Christmas Concert annually and brings in a recording artist to lead the community in getting into the holiday spirit.

Each home also does activities both on and off campus regularly. Youth have input into these outings and will vote on what they would like to do as a family during their self-government meetings. This teaches youth to compromise with others and also how to have fun in a prosocial, healthy environment.



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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Boys Town has many identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs are able to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Approximately one-third of Boys Town children are special education certified. These children receive an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which not only sets goals for their education but also helps to further individualize their service plans. Boys Town schools also have Special Education- endorsed family faculty members who serve as case managers for needed services. Boys Town provides remedial academics, response to intervention, special education classes, and mentoring. In addition, with the new education center, Boys Town schools are working hard to increase the number of Special Education teachers to meet the individual needs of our students. Recently, we have welcomed a new Special Education Director and hired an additional School Psychologist and additional Special Education Coordinators. We identified barriers to some IEP evaluations/updates not occurring right away due to using old technology for obtaining parent signatures. We have recently updated processes and have begun using Adobe sign so parents who live further away from campus are able to not only participate in all steps of the process, but can now quickly sign documents for smoother implementation of plans. Boys Town collaborates with many local and community organizations for many years both in Nebraska and Iowa. Boys Town has formal and informal relationships that are in existence. Boys Town has collaborated with the following service providers who also help in the support of ensuring youth are offered all necessary services to provide ongoing normalcy: mental health agencies, family service agencies, educational service agencies, substance abuse agencies, health care service agencies. Additional resources are also included but not limited to: individual therapy, family therapy, chemical use therapy, mentoring, psychiatric services, variety of medical services, educational or vocational services, and independent living services.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency. As discussed throughout this "Normalcy Plan" Boys Town staff is continually working to ensure they are meeting the individualized needs of all youth in the system. This can be seen based upon Boys Town's service planning process that is discussed within Section Three. Each service plan is individualized, and progress is constantly monitored. Our skilled Consultants work with the entire team to reevaluate needs and adjust service plans to ensure youth needs are met. From a youth's day of admission, throughout ongoing meetings and assessments, the individual needs of youth are addressed.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

Served data from 2022 demonstrates that Boys Town is serving white, african american, asian, American Indian, latio/hispanic, pacific islander, and youth who identify with multiple races.

In addition, Boys Town has a Behavioral Health Services hotline that families can call for additional information, guidance, and to help direct them to the best program or service for their situations. A specialist is available to explain services from psychiatry services, parenting classes, online supports, and help guide individuals seeking help to one of our many programs. If a parent is seeking help for a child in their home, they are able to hear about services, and gain information on how to enter specific programs. If there is interest in utilizing a program, the specialist helps provide them any application forms needed, gets them connected to the admission team for the program and can start processing right away. Information for this hotline is easily searchable and we have seen an increase in different populations being served as evident by the numbers below. Boys Town has a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Per our 2022 Transparency Report, more than 700 of our employees participated in one ore more of our Employee Resource Groups, we have increased out diversity promotion rate by 14.9% over the last 3 years, we have updated training manuals, hosted discussions, and helped employees identify and address unconscious bias.

Boys Town's 2022 Transparency Report also demonstrates our commitment to hiring and promoting staff that represent the diversity in our student population.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

Boys Town youth already have multiple milieus in place that allow them to assist in the implementation of the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standard. We value our kids learning to speak up for what is right, making requests and developing their citizenship skills in all environments. Boys Town youth are able to be elected to Student Council. Student Council members spend time with leaders advocating and representing their peers on issues. As a result of recent advocacy on behalf of the Student Council, we were able to increase attendance at girl s sporting events. Thanks to the Student Council voices, we have included volleyball tailgates and introduced theme nights to student sections at these events. Student Council has reported this has been very exciting and appreciated by their peers, and we have seen increased populations attending games. Peer Ministers are also available to assist in the implementation of the reasonable and prudent parenting standard. Peer Ministers are chosen through an application and interview process. They are students whom adults identify as peer leaders both inside and outside of the classroom. They exhibit a spirit of service and willingness to give their time to peers, Boys Town and the wider community which may include helping walk a new student to their classes, making school announcements, and helping with a variety of activities. Within their own homes, youth can participate and advocate through self-government meetings. These meetings occur daily and allow youth within the home to bring up topics. These meetings teach youth self-empowerment, decision making, and problem solving. Some examples of meeting topics include making outing plans, changing home routines, birthday party planning, how to make new youth feel welcome, and more. It allows all youth in the home to be a part of decision making and have their voice heard. Youth can be voted as manager within their home as well. Some duties may include leading self-government meetings, helping to hold peers accountable, being a leader for advocating, and more. We also have opportunities for youth to participate in a variety of committees on our campus such as the wellness committee. Youth participate and work with adults to plan activities to promote physical activity, and discuss healthy food choices.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Father Flanagan's Boys' Home

Report Author:

Deb McGuire

Author's Title:

Program Support Coordinator

Phone Number:

531-355-1328

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Report Date:

July 8, 2024

Reporting Period (fill in the year):

July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted annually by June 30th)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

A major focus in our programs is teaching youth social, independent-living, and educational skills, and helping them build healthy relationships with their family and others. Youth and families engage with each other and have a clear voice in their service plans as well as the supports that are set in place to help them succeed.

Each summer our youth attend summer school in the morning, and then participate in Summer Enrichment. Summer Enrichment gives youth the opportunity to rotate through various modules of activities that expose them to things such as gardening, baking competitions, career exploration (including the opportunity to become CPR certified!), painting canvases and other crafts, character development (writing cards and making door hangers for Children's Hospital), Team Building activities and more.

During the month of March our Juniors and Seniors had the opportunity to attend Prom and Post Prom. The Post Prom Committee put in hundreds of hours of work in creating a fun, safe and memorable evening for our youth with a Holiday Extravaganza theme. Youth had all of the same experiences on prom day to include hair, make-up, flowers, pictures and dressing up. Families were also able to come be a part of helping their children get ready for prom and take pictures. Younger children in our program who were not old enough to attend prom also had a special "Prom" event with fun games and a taco bar to attend that day.

We value our youth advocating for changes, and by working alongside them we are not only able to address barriers to normalcy but we are helping them grow in their leadership skills and identify how they can contribute in great ways.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Boys Town strives to achieve normalcy as much as possible for our youth. As barriers are identified we work to remediate them as quickly as possible as long as we can do so without violating the safety and well-being of the youth being served. Barriers can be identified through youth advocating for change in student council, self-government or regular safety checks. Youth have access to advocate for change at any level, and with any staff member.

This year we are working to update our process for youth orientation to ensure that all youth are provided with information regarding expectations, rules, and opportunities at the time of admission.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

See Addendum

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

A barrier identified last year was our youth graduating from the program with little knowledge about technology. Providing each youth with a personal laptop to use during the school day has remediated this barrier. This change will continue to be monitored and changes will be made moving forward.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

Boys Town develops an individualized Service Plan for each child with goals and objectives that are developed with the child, family, Referral Worker, and other members of the team. Being involved in pro-social activities is foundational to our campus. Our youth have many opportunities to get involved in various activities, and this is often identified as a service plan goal. Boys Town provides strength-based services that are designed to support and teach children new skills that prepare them for success during their stay in the program as well as at their next environment, be it home, a foster home, independent living, or other appropriate placement.

Boys Town is excited to be able to offer a Golf Club to our students for the first time this spring. Boys Town is working with an organization called First Tee that supplies equipment and volunteer coaching to our students.

Boys Town also has grown their alumni supports over the past year and offers any Seniors the opportunity to work with our Successful Futures Program. This program helps plan for post-graduation plans, whether they involve post-secondary education, workforce training, armed forces, or trades. Senior students participate in various modules that cover everything from car maintenance, applying for an apartment, opening a checking or savings account, getting a driver's permit and advocating for themselves.

One examples of a youth that has taken advantage of this program is (name redacted) who is graduated this past May. He was able to obtain an off-campus job, obtain his driver's permit, and open a bank account. After graduation, he was accepted at to a college and was able to move directly to campus. Boys Town's Successful Futures program is continuing to work with him through our Trade Life program to provide on-going support.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Boys Town's Successful Futures program accepted twenty-two new graduates into our Housing Program this May. This program continues to grow and fill a big need for youth that need additional support after graduating.

We are actively planning on offering landscape design courses in the near future and will soon open Security, Police, and Fire Cadet programs. These new additions have generated a ton of interest amongst youth.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

This year our Vice President of Youth Care moved to a home on campus so she is easily accessible to campus youth and can be more involved.

Boys Town has policies in place to help ensure youth and families know their rights and supports. Our youth rights document outlines specifics on informed consent, right to nourishment and medical care, right to communicate with significant others, right to respect of body and person, right to have your own possessions, right to privacy, right to freedom of movement and natural elements, right to religion, right to education, right to useful work, right to a service plan with goals, right to leave the program, as well as information on our Youth Safety Line if these rights are not being met. Boys Town follows set procedures for staff ratios to help ensure each youth and family served is able to receive the utmost care. At admission, information is shared with parents or legal guardian's rights in programs. They are also provided with safety line information. Boys Town utilizes team meetings and continues discusses rights with youth and parents throughout services.

Youth are encouraged to be involved in various activities that align with their individual interests. As long as an activity would not interfere with their individualized goals, family teachers or Consultants are open to providing consent for them to participate.

Youth are currently participating in soccer, baseball, track and field, cheer, band and golf, among other things.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

As an organization we are continuously reviewing and updating policies as needed. Each policy goes through a formal review process on a schedule to ensure that as issues are identified they can be addressed in a timely manner.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

Boys Town staff, both in homes and in the schools are aware of the activities with which youth can be involved. One new activity is the Mark Cuban Foundation AI Bootcamp which focuses on artificial intelligence, Chat GPT, and computer vision.

Some additional activities include: Band, Baseball, basketball, board game club, book club, cheer, chess club, craft club, cross country, drama club, flags, football, golf club, HOSA, Manga club, meditation club, mindfulness club, NHS, National music honors society, peer ministry, ROTC, science club, small engines club, soccer, softball, Spanish club, STEM/Robotics club, student council, swim team, track, voices, volleyball, walking club, wrestling, writing club.

Boys Town has also developed additional programs in its Career Readiness Center which offers close-knit set of programs in which high school students can find their passion, learn specific workplace skills and build connections with potential mentors while completing their required academic courses for high school graduation. Boys Town has closely followed workplace trends that indicate an increasing demand for workers who have been trained in the trades and skill-labor fields. Part of this process has involved exploring how to enhance the abilities of our students so they match what employers are looking for in prospective employees. Youth can currently become licensed CNAs, and complete courses such as: communication and media sciences, construction, health occupations, small engines, welding, graphic design, culinary arts, auto mechanics. During the summer on campus, Boys Town youth attend half day school and then participate in the Youth Enrichment Program. This program gives the youth exposure to multiple independent living skills which include things such as cooking, budgeting, as well as multiple other topics of interest to the youth including: learning how to fish, gardening skills, Zumba classes, hiking, team building activities and more.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Boys Town will continue to work on bringing new opportunities to youth through the Successful Futures Program, Career Readiness Center, Summer Programing, and clubs/sports offered. The new mayor of Boys Town has a goal of bringing a girl's wrestling team to Boys Town. No other barriers identified at this time.



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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

Boys Town education staff, family teachers, consultants, and other service providers constantly communicate so a child has wrap around services for any activity. For example, if a student has an IEP that has identified the youth needs more direct one on one help when learning a new skill this effort reaches beyond the class. 504 plans are also developed and followed for each student that needs accommodations.

All of our youth are provided the same opportunities for involvement in activities regardless of their abilities.

Over the past two years, we added additional support in Special Education. In 2021 we had a Special Education Department of three. Since then, the department has grown to 11 team members with the hopes of having a 17-team member Special Education Department by the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The Special Education Department is also holding quarterly meetings called Sit Down With Special Education. Special Education Coordinators present on a topic that is selected by Family Teachers, and then have an open Question & Answer session.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

As our special education team grows we look forward to assessing our internal processes to ensure we continue to meet youth needs.



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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

As discussed throughout this "Normalcy Plan" Boys Town staff is continually working to ensure they are meeting the individualized needs of all youth in the system. This can be seen based upon Boys Town's service planning process. Each service plan is individualized, and progress is constantly monitored. Our skilled Consultants work with the entire team to reevaluate needs and adjust service plans to ensure youth needs are met. From a youth's day of admission, throughout ongoing meetings and assessments, the individual needs of youth are addressed.

Boys Town's sophisticated training system, Boys Town University, offers hundreds of trainings in many topics that are relevant for the services that we provide. When specialized needs arise, there is generally a training available for staff. When a special situation comes up, Boys Town has many resources available to assist in meeting the need. For example, we recently admitted several youth with medical conditions. Our on-campus nurse was able to provide initial support, and a specialized training was identified through Children's Hospital for the staff. Individualized plans were created for each of the youth to ensure that needs were met.

If a youth with specialized needs is admitted to the program, special care is taken to ensure that each member of the team is aware of the needs, interventions and supports that are needed. Increased monitoring is provided if needed, and collaboration between teachers, coaches, family teachers and administration is always occurring.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Boys Town is continuously striving to ensure we have quality systems in place to meet the individualized needs of each youth in our care. Our Training Department has just completed a review of training practices and curriculum and are in the process of rolling out updated modules that will better equip our staff to meet the needs of our service recipients.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Diversity, equity and inclusion have always been at the forefront of Boys Town's mission. We have seven key strategy elements that will ensure our organization will maintain a successful and robust DEI program:

Training and Development:

Create a DEI 'learning journey' for all Boys Town employees to have an exchange of ideas and training opportunities that engage and educate.

Talent Acquisition:

Attract and hire diverse talent by providing the education and guidance needed to make better hiring decisions.

Retention:

Implement strategies that encourage all employees to thrive, grow and stay.

Organizational Commitment:

Leadership's commitment to identify, support and break down systemic barriers to a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Accountability:

Embed DEI in Boys Town policies, practices and culture.

Results-Driven:

Identify and use appropriate metrics to track and measure DEI progress and outcomes.

Community Outreach:

Participate in local and national DEI groups to build relationships that enhance Boys Town's efforts.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

In 2022 more than 700 of our employees participated in one or more of our 8 Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Employees are encouraged to get involved or start a new ERG if there is an identified gap. Each of our ERGs include leadership to provide an open, inclusive environment to pass on new ideas to leadership for consideration and execution.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

Boys Town's youth vote annually for representation in their Student Council. The members of the student council identify and advocate for changes that promote normalcy.

Boys Town youth also vote each year on a mayor and vice-mayor. These students meet with the board to discuss and review normalcy for youth on campus, among other duties. Boys Town's new mayor for the 2024-2025 school year is (name redacted), and the vice mayor is (name redacted). Self-government has been a tradition since 1926 as a tool for citizens to build character, citizenship and a sense of community. Our current elected mayor and vice mayor participated in a variety of campus activities to build their leadership skills. (name redacted) is manager of a team, in student council, and part of other school groups.; (name redacted) is captain of 2 teams, plays 4 different sports, and is part of other school groups. Our small community gives our students the opportunity to participate in many more activities than a traditional school, and every youth is encouraged to get involved in at least one club or sport.

Youth are also able to get involved in each home through self-government meetings. Each home elects a manager weekly as a leader in the home. This position may include duties such as leading self-government meetings, being a leader for advocating for youth in the home, and helping to hold peers accountable.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No barriers have been identified at this time.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Angela Powers

Designee's Title: Vice President of Youth Care, Nebraska

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

During admissions meetings, youth and families are informed of their opportunities to be involved in normalcy activities and are provided with their rights and the normalcy plan/policy. This is also posted in our admissions offices.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

This notification is posted in the youth care building in a conference room where all youth attend an Admission Meeting on their first day on campus. This information is also included in Youth Rights and Parent and Guardian Rights and Responsibilities. Each youth and family are provided with a physical copy of these documents and also sign an acknowledgment upon receipt.

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## Addendum for Boys Town Report

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

The Boys Town Model allows youth to have daily contact as well as ongoing visits with family. We encourage family to come to campus to attend youth sporting events, youth activities and more throughout the year to help build and maintain relationships. Youth are able to access developmentally appropriate technology within their school and home settings. During the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year, all youth in our high school were provided with individual laptops. This enables our youth to continue to learn to use technology appropriately as well as keeping them up to date with their knowledge of technology and it's place in the educational environment. iPads are present in each home so youth are able to video friends and family, we have increased technology in the classroom and at home for educational needs, and there is access to dedicated space and technology for therapy visits completed virtually. Our new Education Center is equipped with cutting-edge science labs, and our classrooms are equipped with innovative technology and welcoming learning environments. We continue to meet educational needs in a variety of ways not only through the typical classroom settings, but through our Career Center and Life Skills Development programs. Our Career Center offers courses such as: Certified Nursing Assistant courses, culinary arts, small motor, graphic design, communication and media sciences, constructive, automotive, and welding courses. Students have the opportunities to develop skills they can bring into jobs, careers, or have a jump start on furthering their education path. The Boys Town Behavioral Health Clinic as well as Boys Town Hospital and Clinic are located right on campus allow youth to get their healthcare needs met. Family Teachers within the home ensure that they set up youth for success by incorporating a family like, sustainable routine. If youth know what to expect on a day in, day out basis, they are able to relax as they know what to expect. Youth engage in typical day to day activities that you would see in any home such as playing games together, watching TV, cooking and cleaning together and having family meals together.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska

Report Author: Kelsey Molina	Author's Title: Supportive Health Services Director
Phone Number: 308-633-3892	Email Address: kmolina@capwn.org
Contract Date: 10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024	Plan Date: 10/01/2023 to 09/30/2024

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

The establishment of normalcy is proven by research and experience to help young people learn how to navigate the world responsibly and with confidence. The reasonable and prudent parent standards as well as case planning are key provisions targeted at promoting normalcy for young people in shelter care. CAPWN's Youth Shelter promotes a trauma informed care approach to youth in shelter in striving to provide normalcy for youth in shelter. The youth shelter will join forces with youth, responsible agencies, and parent/guardians, when appropriate, in planning for the youth to seek employment, a driver's license, going out for sports or school activities, and encouraging individuality. A major goal of this plan is to ensure that the youth's individual goals for themselves are being addressed while maintaining safety, age-appropriateness, legal guardian input, and maintaining youth in as "home-like" of a setting as possible.



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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

The CAPWN youth shelter works with parents and families to encourage positive relationships as governed by the court or DHHS. The youth shelter also encourages professionalism with working with service providers as they provide services for the youth. The shelter is accommodating to meetings and transportation of the youth being provided services. Youth have access to a computer/laptop and to regulated internet. The shelter also has a television with cable and a DVD player. The shelter attempts to work with youth coming from different school districts and when distance is not an issue, the shelter will transport the youth to their "home" school to maintain normalcy. School districts will generally work with youth in person, google classroom, or education software on-line to fulfill their education. The school district will also provide the students with their own computer and in instances when this is not the case, the shelter has one they can use. Youth are asked health questions during intake and if they have not had recent checkups, those will be scheduled in addition to any health care a youth may need or identify during their stay. Youth also follow a daily routine which includes hygiene, education, meals, activities, groups, consistent bedtimes, etc. By participating in a daily routine, the youth learn valuable life skills.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

Recently, after entering the shelter, every age-appropriate youth completes the Casey Life Skills Assessment which helps to develop age-appropriate goals for the youth's case plan. The Youth Shelter follows case planning of the youth as part of team meeting discussions and the desires and needs of the youth are discussed. Team meetings usually include the youth, probation officer, DHHS case worker, parent, and youth shelter staff. Youth goals are usually discussed and a routine in which to accomplish those goals is devised. The shelter provides support, redirection, and encouragement regarding these goals.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

CAPWN Youth Shelter's policies on staffing, supervision, permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities are consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standards. The youth shelter provides opportunities for recreation daily. Youth shelter staff are trained in reasonable and prudent parenting standards.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

CAPWN Youth Shelter utilizes another CAPWN position as a staff community liaison to communicate with shelter staff regarding events and activities that youth can volunteer at or partake in. Staff also attempts to keep apprised of school activities, community activities or youth special interest activities within the community. One staff member is responsible for creating and updating a monthly calendar of internal and external activities for youth to participate in.



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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

The CAPWN Youth Shelter is accessible for youth with special needs and disabilities. If the youth requires more support services than we could provide in-house, we would utilize youth shelter partner agencies who specialize in providing care for their needs and development.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

The youth shelter partakes in team meetings and case management plans tailored to each youth's individual needs. The youth shelter can manage the growth of the youth and adjust and redirect the youth regarding their goals and needs. The youth shelter staff strives to empower youth to advocate for themselves both verbally and in writing. During case planning for all youth, the following individualized needs are taken into account: the child's goals, parent/guardian input when appropriate, child's age and maturity, and potential risks.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

The youth shelter respects and nurtures youth's cultural traditions and backgrounds. We attempt to accommodate an individual youth's culture by allowing youth to make meals or staff make meals consistent with the youth's culture in addition to encouraging youth to participate in diverse cultural activities. We strive to employ a diverse staff from different backgrounds in order to be representative of the youth we are serving. CAPWN believes it is necessary for diversity training and training to empathize for the different populations we may serve. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are of the utmost importance at our agency and are practiced by staff and taught to youth.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

CAPWN has a new program that will be putting together a youth board who will assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parenting standard as well as promoting and supporting normalcy. Additionally, CAPWN has a position on its board of directors that is a liaison for youth in the programs as well as the community to provide information supporting and implementing normalcy as well as other youth-led initiatives.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706 <https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name: Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska

Report Author: Kelsey Molina

Author's Title: Supportive Health Services Director

Phone Number: 308-633-3892

Email Address: [kmolina@capwn.org](mailto:kmolina@capwn.org)

Report Date: April 30, 2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year): ☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov). (The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

To address barriers to normalcy, Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska CAPWN youth shelter assesses each youth individually to see what their needs are and to discover what their “normal” is and try to maintain that. For appropriate social activities, youth go to many outings in the community such as movies, bowling, library, local skate park, YMCA for daily exercise, local pathways, community events such as Bands on Broadway, pumpkin patch, and Polar Plunge. A large focus is placed on Independent Living Skills and youth are encouraged to obtain employment, shopping for groceries on a budget, maintaining good personal hygiene, setting education and career goals, exercising regularly, and cleaning/doing chores. We had several youth that worked at a local fast-food restaurant and attended school full-time. The youth are responsible to make a weekly schedule to balance school and work. Youth are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities and one youth was involved in basketball. The youth attended practices and other shelter youth attended the youth’s basketball game. Youth have contact with family members daily as long as contact is allowed by the placing party. Youth can make phone calls to whoever is on their contact list any time up to 8:30 pm.

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**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

CAPWN creates normalcy effort for all youth placed at the child-care facility, including, not limited to relationships with family, age, or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, educations, and school stability, access to healthcare and information, and access to a supportable and durable

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routine. The facility has a computer, laptop, internet, TV, DVD player, craft items, board games, basketball hoop, etc. The facility follows a typical routine including bedtimes and mealtimes including snack time. The facility allows visits and time with family and friends as appropriate with within reason of routine and placing parties.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

Relationships with family are prioritized and in the case of strained relationships, mediation and family counselling are encouraged. CAPWN has a current Memorandum of Understanding MOU with a Provisional Licensed Mental Health Practitioner that visits the shelter weekly and an MOU with Mediation West who offers mediation services. Youth and their families do receive referrals for these services. Youth have access to computers, laptops, internet, and TV. Education is a priority, youth must maintain school stability, CAPWN staff will transport youth up to 25 miles from the shelter, staff transported the youth every day to school and any extra-curricular activities youth are attending. Another priority is healthcare appointments. Youth shelter



staff ensure dental and health appointments are made for youth and attended. Youth shelter staff follow typical routine including wake times, mealtimes, and bedtimes. Youth and staff volunteer every year at a Thanksgiving event at a local church for the homeless. For every holiday, youth plan and prepare a meal. This year the youth planned and prepared a Thanksgiving feast, St. Patrick's traditional meal (corned beef and cabbage), and Easter Sunday brunch. This past December, youth and staff did a Christmas Tree Decorating Contest called Trees Along the Trail. CAPWN youth shelter encouraged family, friends and people in the community to go and vote for their tree, the shelter earned second place from the contest.

## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes needed to be made at this time. The typical routine for wake times, bedtimes and mealtimes, transporting youth to school, jobs, extra-curricular activities, appointments are a priority and will be continued by all staff at the shelter.

**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

### **1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

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CAPWN follows procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care facility's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care facility. The facility uses the Casey Life Skills Assessment to establish goals that are age and developmentally appropriate. Youth are encouraged to establish their own goals. The first goal set for all youth is safety. Youth are very involved in setting their own goals and some goals youth have set for themselves include getting a job, learning how cook, budget with finances, getting a job, getting grades up, building relationships, and personal development. One youth prepared for their first job. The youth and youth shelter staff filled out the application, prepared for an interview, discussed a plan for transportation and work clothes.

## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes needed at this time, the shelter staff will continue to make it a priority and encourage you to set goals for themselves. It is important staff help youth choose the skill areas and learning goals that they want to work on and provide "real life" learning opportunities for youth can learn how to do different things. Staff will continue to update the youth's plan weekly. It is important to chart the progress of the youth and move on to new goals.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

CAPWN's policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities are consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard. The facility provides opportunities for recreation daily. This can be done through outside activities such as basketball, football, four square, volleyball, outings to places in the community, supervised walks, etc. All staff are trained in reasonable and prudent parenting standards (RPPS) using the curriculum information provided by the state. A staff member is available 24/7 who can authorize the RPPS. During weekly staff meetings, staff have conversations on what is acceptable/not acceptable for this youth at shelter.



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## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes needed at this time, the staff policy at the shelter will continue to be a ratio of 6 youth to 1 staff during the day and 12 youth to 1 staff at night, though we usually have more staff than that at the facility. We will guarantee staff are current on getting training on the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standards (RPPS) and have one member of staff available to 24/7 to enact the RPPS. Staff will continue to provide opportunities for recreation daily, cooking, and participate in household chores.

**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

### **1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

A list of activities that the child-care facility provides are located within our Youth Handbook and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care facility will make children aware, promote and support all access are available. Standard activities include going to the local mall, local park/skate park, local library, YMCA, bowling, movies, hikes to local pathways, Wildcat Hills, Bad Lands, and Scotts Bluff

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Monument, and local school events. Youth and staff do many community volunteering such as delivering Meals on Wheels and Pup Packs/Cat Packs at local schools, community services at the zoo and humane society, and help at the CAPWN commodity warehouse.

## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are needed at this time, the youth shelter plans on using a list of activities located in the Youth Handbook which is onsite, and all staff can keep track of local activities in the community and convey them to the youth. Staff work hard to make sure activities are not duplicated within the same week.

**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

### **1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

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There are accommodations and support services so that youth with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers. Youth with special needs are provided with any accommodation as needed. Some examples are that the facility is handicap accessible and when there were youth with diabetes at the shelter, it was arranged for medical staff from the clinic to come to the shelter and give staff training. We had a youth in the past with medical conditions, had a hard time focusing on schoolwork. Staff worked hard to make sure the youth were able to focus by reducing clutter, and background noise. One youth needed accommodations due to their medical condition they had difficulties staying still during table time, staff allowed breaks and movement as needed.

## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes need to be made at this time; the youth shelter will ensure accessibility to youth of all abilities. Youth shelter staff will continue to be required to review the policy in place at the shelter that requires people with disabilities be provided with reasonable accommodation and prohibits discrimination based on a disability.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

The individualized needs of all youth involved in the system are considered. The facility uses a level system to support behavioral management. Although the level system provides a framework for behavioral all youth are treated as individuals and the level system is adjusted accordingly. Regardless of an individualized plan, the youth shelter staff work hard to support the interest of all the youth. One example of an individualized need for one youth who requested vegetarian options for meals. The youth stated the reason for being vegetarian is due to health and well-being. It was important that staff respected the decision of the youth and kept their health and nutrition in mind when shopping for groceries and preparing meals.

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**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes needed at this time, the shelter will continue using the level system. The shelter staff believe as youth progress through the levels, the behavioral expectation and privileges provided for acceptable behavior are altered toward the eventual goal of self-management.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Efforts to reduce disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations. This includes staff are trained in cultural competency staff who work with youth are hired from a variety of diverse backgrounds to be representative of the youth we are serving, and language barriers are considered and some of our staff are bilingual to communicate with youth and parent/guardians. All youth at the shelter are included and treated equally. Many single rooms are available if there is an LGBTQ youth who needs a single room. At intake, one youth shared their preferred pronouns, at the shelter staff weekly meetings it was discussed how to support and respect the young girl's pronouns throughout their stay. CAPWN has policies and procedures in place that hires staff from different cultures who will assist youth in making meals from their culture.

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Recently, all youth shelter staff received training from Out Nebraska. Out Nebraska embraces and celebrates the full spectrum of LGBTQIAzS+ people and people of color. The topic of the training was LGBTQ+ 101. It was an exploration of LGBTQ+ identities and orientation, as well as discussion of LGBTQ+ families, transgender folks and community challenges in the current climate. Staff left with an understanding of the LGBTQ+ community and how to interact honestly and comfortably with LGBTQ+ people coming into the youth shelter. At the youth shelter, there are visible expressions of support such as symbols and signs which lets staff and youth know that the shelter is marked a safe space with the LGBTQ.

## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes to the plan are needed. We do believe more training is needed for staff and our youth at the shelter. We plan to continue to train and educate staff on the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other population.

**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

### **1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

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Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

In the past, efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care facility and promoting and supporting normalcy included CAPWN had a position on its board of directors that was a liaison for youth in the programs as well as the community to provide information supporting and implementing normalcy as well as other youth led initiatives.



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## **2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

One of the barriers is the youth shelter is constantly facing staff turnover. For a short period of time the youth shelter was fully staffed but before the end of the year, three full-time (including overnight staff), and one part-time staff resigned due to relocation. The director and manager spend most of their time recruiting, training, familiarizing themselves with new staff, and covering shifts. Once we are fully staffed, the goal is to increase staff training and focus on finding youth that can have a position on its board of directors.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Kelsey Molina

Designee's Title: Supportive Health Services Director

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

At intake, staff can communicate with youth about appropriate activities they can participate in. Youth will have access to a tablet where they can give their suggestions. Staff will discuss activities at their weekly meeting.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

The notification is posted outside of the window in the dining room. All youth have access to this notification as it is a common area where all youth and staff join.

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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Care-RIE

Report Author:

Chrystol Spraling

Author's Title:

Executive Director

Phone Number:

402-609-0780

Email Address:

care\_riemae@yahoo.com

Contract Date:

October 1, 2023

Plan Date:

October 1, 2023

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

Care-RIE is aware of the barriers to normalcy, therefore Care-RIE uses the following to break down barriers by:

Asking questions about processes that don't make sense.

Make suggestions for improvement when opportunities arise.

Get involved with local foster parent advocates.

Advocate for children in your care

Be involved with the child's education and extracurricular activities.

When an activity requires spending money

Look for resources

ou<https://dhhs.ne.gov/DD%20Documents/DD%20Abuse-Neglect%20Training.pdf#search=abuse%20trainingstside> of the agency.

Checking child's school, or county's child welfare board, or local faith-based organizations.

Work with caseworkers to find solutions.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

See Addendum

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

See Addendum

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

The law explicitly defines a caregiver to include a designated official for a childcare institution in which a child in foster care has been placed. The law requires that a designated official be always onsite to exercise the reasonable and prudent parent standard. This ensures that children in group homes or other residential facilities have access to someone who is trained in making decisions using this standard and can consent to the youth's participation in activities. Care-RIE will always have a designated official onsite

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

Care-RIE will Promote, and support access; by participating in the following:

Community events and activities

Most short trips or excursions.

Camping/hiking

Sports and clubs

Swimming and water activities

Day/sleep over camps

Field trips

School related activities

Youth organization activities

Attending a movie/mall or other social outing with friends

Spending the night away from the caregiver's home at the home of friends or as part of a planned activity Volunteering and internships

Dating

Travel in cars with peers and/or the parents of peers

Access to a telephone for phone calls

Access to the internet and social media

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

See Addendum

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency. Care-RIE will make decisions for each individual on a case-by-case situation. Using the standards: In applying the standard, a Care-RIE will gather adequate information about the activity, think about the youth, and consider the following:

- ? The appropriateness of the activity, child/youth's age, and developmental stage.
- ? Potential safety risks involved in the activity.
- ? Supports, planning, or accommodations that can help manage the potential risks of the activity.
- ? Determine if supervision will be provided or is needed.
- ? Encourage the child/youth's formation of healthy age-appropriate social relationships and bonds.
- ? Allow the child/youth to maintain an age-appropriate degree of personal privacy.
- ? Helps the child/youth develop skills and nurtures an interest or talent.
- ? Encourage emotional, developmental, or cultural growth of the child/youth.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

the reasonable and prudent parent standard asks caregivers to make decisions for youth just as they would for their own children. It is characterized by careful and sensible decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interest of the child, while also encouraging growth through participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities. Care-RIE will put the standard in place by ensuring that Care-RIE has training in exercising the standard.

In applying the standard, a Care-RIE will gather adequate information about the activity, think about the youth, and consider the following:

- ? The appropriateness of the activity, child/youth's age, and developmental stage.
- ? Potential safety risks involved in the activity.
- ? Supports, planning, or accommodations that can help manage the potential risks of the activity.
- ? Determine if supervision will be provided or is needed.
- ? Encourage the child/youth's formation of healthy age-appropriate social relationships and bonds.
- ? Allow the child/youth to maintain an age-appropriate degree of personal privacy.
- ? Helps the child/youth develop skills and nurtures an interest or talent.
- ? Encourage emotional, developmental, or cultural growth of the child/youth.
- ? Helps connect the child/youth to the community.
- ? Helps the child/youth to use and develop age-appropriate autonomy and decision-making skills.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

Not to make it personal but we are an agency own by a person of color so Care-RIE is aware of the disproportionate impact. Therefore, Care-RIE make decisions on a case by case basis and by the health and safety and the best interest of the youth.

## Care-RIE Normalcy Plan Addendum

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Care-RIE:

1. Believes a child has the right to live a healthy, normal childhood is paramount.
2. A reasonable and prudent parent standard will be applied to decisions regarding a child's participation in normal childhood activities.
3. Normalcy focuses on enabling opportunities for social development, recreation, academic growth, and positive life experiences based on a child's desires and developmental, emotional, physical, and other needs.
4. Care-RIE shall not contradict any existing court order or care precaution plan.  
While Care-RIE have authority to make decisions about the normal activities of foster children in our care, Care-RIE will consider known parental wishes in these decisions.
5. The assigned child welfare professional will make diligent efforts to keep the parent(s) informed and involved, including the resolution of differences between the caregiver and parent.
6. Overnight / Planned Activities and Outings.
  - a. The out-of-home caregiver must determine that the activity or outing is safe and appropriate in accordance with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.
  - b. Children shall be encouraged to participate in normal school, community, or social activities and outings such as employment, school field trips, dating, scout camping trips, and activities with friends, school, and church groups as appropriate for the child based upon a reasonable and prudent parent standard.
  - c. Background screening is not required for the child's participation in normal childhood activities and outings like sleepovers with friends, participation in school lock-in's, or team sports.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

"Reasonable and prudent parent standard" means the standard characterized by careful and sensible parental decisions that maintain the child's health, safety, and best interests while at the same time encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth, that a caregiver shall use when determining whether to allow a child in out-of-home care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.



#### CARE-RIE's REQUIREMENTS FOR DECISIONMAKING —

- (a) Each child who comes into care under this chapter is entitled to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities.
- (b) Care-RIE must use a reasonable and prudent parent standard in determining whether to give permission for a child in out-of-home care to participate in extracurricular, enrichment, and social activities. When using the reasonable and prudent parent standard, the caregiver shall consider:
  1. The child's age, maturity, and developmental level to maintain the overall health and safety of the child.
  2. The potential risk factors and the appropriateness of the extracurricular, enrichment, and social activity.
  3. The best interest of the child based on information known by the caregiver.
  4. The importance of encouraging the child's emotional and developmental growth.
  5. The importance of providing the child with the most family-like living experience possible.
  6. The behavioral history of the child and the child's ability to safely participate in the proposed activity, as with any other child.

Care-RIE will consult with the child or youth about their wishes in an age-appropriate manner. Involving youth in decisions about their participation in activities provides learning opportunities for the child, promotes independent living skills, and empowers the child to be involved in their own planning. In the end, the caregiver gets to make the decision.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

#### **What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

The reasonable and prudent parent standard asks caregivers to make decisions for youth just as they would for their own children. It is characterized by careful and sensible decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interest of the child, while also encouraging growth through participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities. Care-RIE will put the standard in place by ensuring that Care-RIE's staff have training in exercising the standard.

In applying the standard, Care-RIE should gather adequate information about the activity, think about the youth, and consider the following:

- The appropriateness of the activity, child/youth's age, and developmental stage
- Potential safety risks involved in the activity
- Supports, planning, or accommodations that can help manage the potential risks of the activity
- Determining if supervision will be provided or is needed
- Encouraging the child/youth's formation of healthy age-appropriate social relationships and bonds

- Allowing the child/youth to maintain an age-appropriate degree of personal privacy
- Helping the child/youth develop skills and nurtures an interest or talent
- Encouraging the emotional, developmental, or cultural growth of the child/youth
- Helping connect the child/youth to the community
- Helping the child/youth to use and develop age-appropriate autonomy and decision-making skills

#### Youth with Disabilities:

Youth with disabilities and special needs should have access to the same opportunities for participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities as their peers without special needs. Under federal and state law, individuals with disabilities cannot be excluded from services and benefits provided by Care-RIE based on their disability. The obligation to provide normalcy and access to age and developmentally appropriate experiences applies to all youth in the care of Care-RIE. Care-RIE and its representatives will make reasonable accommodations for the youth if there are barriers to participation.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Care-RIE

Report Author:

Chrystol Spraling

Author's Title:

Executive Director

Phone Number:

402-609-0780

Email Address:

care\_riemae@yahoo.com

Report Date:

April 30, 2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the

year): ☐ October 1, 23 through March 31, 2024

☒ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

The three barriers that is agency address placement disruption, lack of programs and trauma of the youth. Placement disruption is a barrier because this agency is a short-term placement, for this reason we try to get youth in programs as soon as possible. The next barrier is the lack of programs to meet everyone's needs. Lastly, due to the trauma that most of the youth here experience the youth are not always willing to join in activities or participate in activities.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

The modifications that this agency will make moving forward to address the barriers will have to be done on a case by case basis. Due to the fact that this agency is a temporary placement we can't stop the placement disruptions. We also can't stop the youth from experiencing trauma which in turn keeps the youth from participating.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

We make normalcy efforts for all youth some examples would be we allow all you to have cell phones or tablets in the home if they are not on restrictions. We allow our youth to participate in school activities. We plan for youth open to receive health services whether in person or telehealth.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes at this time due to the fact that normalcy needs are being met in these areas.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

In our pre-intake and intake meetings, we survey the case team on information about the youth. We ask questions like what school do they attend, what activities are they interested in, what are their short-term needs, and what are their long term needs. We also asked about their long-term goals and their short-term goals. Then we also asked about upcoming appointments, plans for therapy and if there were any family visits. We learn what they would like to accomplish while they are here. We then discuss the things that we can help them accomplish and we immediately get started with the things that we can help with to keep the youth on track.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Due to the short term placements of the youth we don't feel as if any changes need to be made going forward.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

Our policies are consistent with the statute. The policies promote and protect the youth's ability to participate in age or developmentally appropriate extracurricular, enrichment, culture, and social activities.  
Extracurricular: several youth continued to play on sports teams at school and participate in school clubs like the debate team chess team and band.  
Enrichment: activities include volunteering at the Humane Society and art therapy  
Culture: several youth attend religious functions all of different denominations.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Due to the fact that the youth's needs are being met no changes are needed at this time.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

Activities are implemented according to the youth's interest and what we feel is age appropriate

On site activities:

Educational: literacy night. STEM activities, arts and crafts and social skills.

Painting, drawing, dance, and self-expression  
structural playtime in safe outdoor spaces.

Community:

Field trips: museums, zoos, parks, libraries, skating, trampoline parks, tours, musicals, parades.

Community service: humane society, keep Omaha clean, Girls Inc., Boys and Girls Club

Cultural celebrations: diverse cultural celebrations (Lunar New Year, Diwali, Easter, Juneteenth)

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Due to the short term placement of youth no changes are needed to be made at this time.



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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

Accommodations and support services play a crucial role in ensuring that youth with disabilities and special needs can fully participate in appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers this is accomplished by making sure we communicate with the youth on a level that they can understand. The next crucial component is finding activities that they can fully successfully participate in. The final key piece to this task is finding and using the resources that are available so that we are making sure that the youth well-being is the most important. These are our strategies that we use and find necessary to help our youth with special needs.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Due to the support systems and the staff trainings on children with disabilities and special needs no changes are needed at this time.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

The agency's normalcy plan is based on the youth's individual needs and not A one size fits all, each youth is assessed interviewed and then goals are set.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time no change to the plans need to be done due to the youth needs already being met and on an individual basis .

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Addressing the disproportionate impact of the systems on families and children of color is crucial for promoting equity and justice. Here are some strategies that we have been using to reduce disproportionality and disparities system:

Understanding and Addressing Biases: by promoting awareness and training, we work toward more equitable decision-making.

Culturally Responsive Practices: We developed practices that are culturally responsive which ensures that services and interventions consider the unique needs and perspectives of the diverse backgrounds of each individual.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Due to the successfulness of the program no changes need to be due at this time.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard, promote and support normalcy has not been completely established due to short term placement of youth.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

These are the changes that our agency will make to accomplish having a youth board.

Engage Youth: Involve youth in the decision-making process. Seek their input on policies, activities, and opportunities.

Collaborate with Stakeholders: Work with community partners, foster parents, and other professionals to establish the board.

Define Roles and Responsibilities: Clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the youth board members.

Provide Training: Train board members on the RPPS, child welfare policies, and their role in promoting normalcy.

Create Opportunities: Develop activities and events that allow youth to participate actively and provide feedback.

Evaluate and Adjust: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the youth board and make necessary adjustments.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Chrystol Spraling\_\_\_\_\_

Designee's Title: Executive Director\_\_\_\_\_

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

This notification process takes place in the intake meeting

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

Notification is posted on the bulletin boards.

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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

CEDARS Youth Services: Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter

Report Author:

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Contract Date:

10/1/2023-9/30/2024

Plan Date:

10/31/2023

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

CEDARS Youth Services works to ensure that every youth placed in Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter experiences safety, stability, and enduring family relationships. Staff training, program policies and procedures, and the physical space have all been designed to create a homelike atmosphere in the shelter (comfortable furnishings, bedrooms that can be decorated, access to a backyard with bicycles, green space, and a basketball court). Typically, CEDARS program structure provides opportunities to participate in education and extra-curricular activities at each youth's home school, join in family events, participate in recreation in the community, and work at a part-time job. Youth placed in Emergency Shelter can choose to check in any money they have or earn to staff for safe-keeping while placed in Shelter, or may choose to maintain possession of it. Youth have opportunities to go shopping in the community, which promotes normalcy. If a youth has a driver's license and their own vehicle (with required registration and insurance), they are allowed to keep their vehicle on site at CEDARS and utilize it to transport themselves to work and school, if allowed by their parent/legal guardian. Each youth in care has an individualized service plan that is designed in partnership with the youth to best meet their developmental and social and emotional needs and interests.

The expansion of CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter to two levels that occurred during and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic enabled youth to have their own room, another "normal" experience of many teenage youth, but one which is not always typical for youth in congregate care. Youth are able to conduct visits with members of their support networks by utilizing technology or via on-campus visits. Additionally, all staff are trained on the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard and apply the standard as applicable and appropriate to help youth pursue and experience normalcy. Existing barriers to normalcy include lack of parental engagement, challenges regarding school enrollment (particularly for youth from outside the Lincoln community, and youth experiencing frequent placement disruptions.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter offers a consistent routine and access to activities and services. Family engagement is a priority and youth in care can communicate with their families via telephone, on-site visits, or during home visits as outlined in each individualized service plan. Activities are planned and available for individual and group participation each day; youth are engaged in determining activities and schedules are posted throughout the Shelter. To assist youth with education, job searches, and entertainment, access to on-site technology includes computers with internet access, televisions, and video game systems with appropriate content restrictions in place. Typically, weekly visits are scheduled to the public library with access to books, magazines, and computers for social media engagement. Educational stability is maintained by providing transportation to a student's home school for those who are from the local area. Shelter staff, in tandem with CEDARS Education program, work to re-enroll any students not currently attending school or to develop a plan for the GED if appropriate. For youth suspended or expelled, homework support and tutoring is available so youth don't fall behind on their coursework. For youth involved in extra-curricular activities or employment, transportation is coordinated to allow them to continue while placed in Shelter. Youth are also provided with coaching and support to obtain or maintain employment while in care. Physical, dental, and mental health are all assessed at the time of intake. Immediate needs are addressed right away, and ongoing health needs are met as needed. CEDARS maintains working partnerships with medical and dental providers in the community to ensure these needs are met. Youth are provided with the necessary technology to ensure they can complete their homework, connect with their support networks, and to utilize for entertainment. Many youth get their physical, mental, and behavioral health needs met via telehealth services, when appropriate. Youth whose discharge plan is to independent living or older teens returning home are permitted to use their personal cell phones with staff supervision.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

CEDARS has clear policies and procedures that guide individualized assessment and case planning processes. CEDARS is accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA), which provides guidance related to assessment and service planning practices. Emergency Shelter staff and case managers utilize SMART goals when working with clients on service plan goals. Beginning at the time of intake, youth are informed of the importance of their role in establishing goals, monitoring progress, and planning for their stay. The CEDARS Case Manager works with the youth and their family or DHHS Caseworker/Probation Officer (if applicable), teachers, therapist or counselor, and other supports to develop a plan built on the youth's strengths and needs. The individualized Service Plan goals for each youth are based upon identified needs and goals in the referral and any needs identified during the assessment process, which takes place within 24 hours of admission. The individualized Service Plan is created within five days of intake and is reviewed and updated on a biweekly basis to monitor progress and barriers, and to make any adjustments to goals or action steps as appropriate. Shelter staff engage each youth in daily conversations about their progress and any barriers to reaching their goals. CEDARS Case Managers arrange biweekly team meetings that include DHHS, Probation Officers, family members, attorneys, to review goals, progress on goals, behavioral needs, and updates on discharge plans. In addition to these team meetings, Pioneers Center Case Managers and leadership have weekly meetings reviewing youth progress, needs, and brainstorming additional strategies to engage the youth more effectively or services to advocate for the youth. Case Managers also meet with the CEDARS education team to review the educational needs and progress and to identify activities or services needed to support the youth in their educational experience while placed in shelter.



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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

CEDARS follows established policies and procedures on staffing and supervision. CEDARS utilizes the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard when giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities. CEDARS Emergency Shelter staff monitor the community risk level for COVID-19 and take that information into consideration when making a determination regarding youth requests for activities outside of the Emergency Shelter.

In addition to 40 hours of training through the CEDARS New Employee Training program, new staff members also participate in 32 hours of training on Risking Connection, which is the trauma-informed model of care that CEDARS utilizes. Additionally, new staff participate in 40 hours of on-site shadowing with current staff members. All staff receive regular 1:1 supervision (monthly) with a supervisor, during which time additional coaching or support can be offered.

Shelter is staffed at a staff/client ratio of 1:4 during awake hours. All staff members also receive training on the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS). Clients are informed at the time of intake on the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, consistent with the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard. This process is posted in the Shelter, along with request forms that clients can complete. When a request form has been completed and turned in by a client, it is reviewed by Shelter management staff and the client is notified if their request was approved or denied, and why, if appropriate. Youth can also make a request verbally.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

We have long-standing relationships with community partners and donors which typically allows us to offer many community activities to youth. Some of the community activities that youth are typically able to participate in are: educational outings such as visiting museums, the State Capitol Building, nature centers, Lincoln Children's Zoo, Omaha Henry Doorly Zoo, or the Farmer's Market; volunteer opportunities such as picking up trash in a city park; recreational outings including Urban Air, bowling, going to the movie theater, Round 1 at the mall, Putt-Putt golfing, fishing, laser tag, visiting local parks, weekly ice cream outings, and having meals out at restaurants. Additionally, youth can go to the YMCA, the library, have shopping outings, and attend local sporting events.

On-site activities include basketball, volleyball, soccer, bike riding, gardening, playing music, TV, movies, video games, and reading. Youth can take walks on campus (if there are no restrictions from probation or DHHS), get a haircut, and make calls to friends who are approved contacts. Youth can access the canteen in the Shelter which has various snacks to choose from, in addition to scheduled daily meals and snacks. Art supplies are available for youth to use at their leisure or during structured arts and crafts groups, along with crochet and knitting supplies. Additional groups are available on-site, covering topics including nutrition, budgeting, healthy relationships, cooking, and meditation. Youth also have the opportunity to interact with a therapy dog, who visits the Emergency Shelter.

Staff has also began to identify community activities that may be of interest to the youth. These activities are shared via our Slack communication platform which have included: back to school bash at the univeristy, opporunities to read with therapy animals at the library, a new park made for teens in a nearby community, a screen printing activity at the library, a teen activity at The Bay, firework displays, and car shows. Youth are provided with this information and allowed to identify activities they would like to participate in.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

CEDARS Youth Services designed the physical space and programming of the Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter to be accessible to youth with a range of disabilities and special needs. The facility is ADA compliant, including an elevator and handicapped-accessible restroom and shower facilities. Staff receive training in understanding a range of communication styles and behavior patterns and provide support to youth based on their developmental level. Support is provided to each youth according to their individualized case plan and may include assistance with homework, personal care, or outdoor activities.

In August 2022, CEDARS Pioneers Center Shelter obtained training and consultation from the Brain Injury Alliance, an Occupational Therapist from Madonna Rehabilitation, and a Speech-Language Pathologist from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for environmental accommodations that can be made to support youth with a variety of mental health and acquired injury needs. These accommodations have included adaptations to lighting, understanding of various auditory sensory needs, and opportunities for sensory seeking and avoiding youth so they can better engage in school and programming.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

As stated previously, CEDARS has clear policies and procedures to ensure that every youth has an individualized case plan based on their unique strengths and needs. CEDARS utilizes an internally-created comprehensive assessment which is administered at time of intake. This assessment includes the following domains: placement/housing; family & relationships; parenting (for youth who are parenting); self-identity; independent living/concrete supports; education/child development; employment; legal; recreation; physical health; substance use; and mental health/safety/trauma. Youth goals are based on the assessed needs of each specific youth, as well as upon any needs specified in the referral. Care is taken to plan activities that are based on the current interests of the youth in the Shelter. Meal planning includes a review of the health, religious, and/or cultural needs of youth. Youth are provided with choices and provided a voice in both their own case planning and in the programming provided. CEDARS is committed to preserving the rights of all clients regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, physical abilities, religious beliefs, racial background, or economic status. This is evidenced in our approach to all aspects of care. For example, CEDARS Emergency Shelter frequently serves youth who identify as transgender. CEDARS Emergency Shelter program and staff respect youth's specified gender identity, and youth are able to be housed with the gender that corresponds to their gender identity while they are placed with us. Youth are addressed using their preferred name and pronouns while in CEDARS care. In August 2022, CEDARS Emergency Shelter developed differentiated programs to support youth's individualized needs. These three tracks within shelter are called Balance, Courage and Resilience and each track offers different levels of structured activities and programming throughout the day. Balance offers high level programming and structure, Courage offers a moderate level of structure for youth to have prescribed programming activities and some free time, while Resilience offers programming with high levels of unstructured free time aimed at youth whose discharge plan is one where they will have to manage their free time independently. Youth are matched to the structure that best fits their needs. Groups offered in each program throughout the week are selected by lead staff who tailor the groups the needs and interests of the youth currently being served.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

CEDARS has a non-discrimination policy for employees and clients and CEDARS strives to recruit a diverse workforce to provide role models for youth in care. One key initiative of CEDARS current Strategic Plan is to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the CEDARS organization, with goals to decrease racial disparity between employees and clients, as well as between licensed foster families and clients. Within programming space, attention is given to the selection of art, décor, and photographs to provide a welcoming space for a diverse population of youth. Connections to community organizations that support specific minority populations are also made through referrals and invitations for program speakers, etc. Staff are provided training on cultural competency and respectfully working with a diverse array of clients. Understanding diversity includes racial and ethnic minorities, refugees and immigrants, LGBTQ identity, socio-economic status, and religion. The Service Director for Emergency Shelter sits on the Lancaster County Committee for Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED). This committee meets quarterly and is comprised of stakeholders from all system points and works to address disparities in ethnic and minority representation. CEDARS also has an internal Inclusion and Diversity Committee which hosts awareness events, training opportunities, and seeks to foster diversity and equity. Internal procedures for Pioneers Center for review of referrals, interview and admissions processes, and decisions regarding discharge (especially when unplanned) follow identified processes that have the intention of reducing the impact of implicit bias. Our agency regularly reviews admissions and discharge data along with demographic data to look for trends that might indicate disproportionality in our internal processes.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

Youth involved with CEDARS programs are invited and encouraged to be involved with the Youth Action Board (YAB), which is a youth advisory board that is part of the Lincoln Homeless Coalition. CEDARS Bridges Transitional Living and Street Outreach Services Program Director Christina Lloyd facilitates this group, with the purpose being to ensure that youth voices are heard as part of decision-making pertaining to homeless or near-homeless populations in Lincoln. Youth from all CEDARS programs, including Emergency Shelter, are invited to attend and are welcome to participate. The YAB meets twice a month, with one meeting solely promoting normalcy by being a recreational team-building activity in the community and the other time being a "working meeting" where the youth provide feedback and input regarding the array of homelessness prevention services in the community and ideas for serving those who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. Some youth who participate are "system-involved" and are able to talk freely at that meeting about their experiences and needs, and the meeting is guided by the youth.

CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter creates opportunities where youth can be nominated for 'Peer Leader'. This youth is asked for feedback on programming needs for youth and is allowed to select outings and activities for all of the youth to participate in. Youth meet with support services on regular basis (typically weekly) to discuss food preferences and recommendations to incorporate preferred foods into the menu. They also provide feedback on snacks that they like and are able to request special cakes for birthdays and other significant celebrations.

CEDARS is currently creating an application/nomination process whereby a youth served in one of our programs can become a full and voting member of the CEDARS Youth Services Board of Directors. Implementation of this process will likely occur in early to mid-2024. CEDARS continues to explore different configurations and options to ensure the inclusion of youth voice in programming.

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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

CEDARS Youth Services

Report Author:

Allyson Rickertsen

Author's Title:

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Phone Number:

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Email Address:

arickertsen@cedarskids.org

Report Date:

04/30/2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

Over the past year, over 25 youth were able to apply for and obtain part-time employment when it was deemed appropriate by their team and in line with their discharge plan. These youth were provided opportunities to participate in resume writing workshops and mock interviews in preparation for obtaining jobs. Youth were provided transportation to jobs and were also taught to ride the bus by doing several practice/training rides with staff.

Youth were also able to participate in sports at their school. One youth completed his football season playing JV football with his school. He participated in all activities related to these activities such as team building activities, practices and fundraising activities as well as games.

Another youth had previously been the manager for her school's baseball team and was able to participate in this again when the baseball season returned. She was supported in participating in all activities such as practices, games, and other team building activities.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Ongoing barriers include lack of a support system and parental engagement. CEDARS Case Managers continue to identify ways to increase youth support systems including building partnerships with community organizations that allow for additional mentoring and support for youth. We have built relationships with organizations such as Wellbeing Initiative and I've Got a Name that have provided mentorship and peer support for youth when appropriate and needed.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

See Addendum

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

An identified barrier for attending medical appointments is the lack of providers that accept Medicaid. Most youth we serve do qualify for Medicaid. The most difficult provider to get clients into is dentists. We continue to search for new providers in the area.

CEDARS obtained grant funding in 2023 that allowed us to contract with an APRN that can meet with youth here 2x per month to reduce the barriers for youth seeing medication providers in a timely manner.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

One example of a Case Manager following the processes for assessment and individualized planning is for a youth that was placed by DHHS. He completed an intake assessment shortly after arrival. His case manager collaborated with him to create specific goals. This youth had no family involvement. Based upon his intake assessment and service plan, CEDARS assisted the youth in getting connected with a medication provider, established him with a primary care physician, and helped him get glasses that he needed. CEDARS also helped him obtain interviews for employment (including getting appropriate clothing and making a resume), established him with a therapist that specialized in working with wards/former wards who have aged out of the system, helped him obtain his vital documents, and helped advocate for him regarding his current charges so he could avoid further system involvement. This planning was specific to his needs and upon the completion of his placement and service plan goals the youth moved into an independent living program where he has been successfully maintaining employment and his apartment.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Processes for intake assessment and service planning are outlined in agency procedure and follow best practices as identified by our accrediting body, the Council on Accreditation. CEDARS will continue to follow these expectations and standards surrounding assessment and service planning.

CEDARS Shelter has been intentional about helping identify needed services, barriers, and supports as soon as the youth are referred for shelter even prior to their intake which provides contextual information that better informs case planning and management when the youth arrive.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

CEDARS continues to follow expected staffing ratios as outlined in state licensing requirements. CEDARS continues to operate at a ratio of 1:4.

Over the last year CEDARS provided sufficient staffing so the youth could all go to the Omaha Zoo. This required additional staffing so the youth could stay for several hours rather than having to return at the time of normal shift change for staff. Staff were willing to work additional hours for that specific event so the youth could enjoy the full zoo experience.

The YMCA requires one CEDARS staff for every two youth. At least once per week, CEDARS accommodates this required staffing ratio to provide opportunities for youth to play basketball, go swimming and lift weights in this community-based setting, which is often requested by youth.

CEDARS also provided staff to supervise visitation that needed to occur so a youth in placement could spend time with his young son. The client's parents were not willing to let the youth visit alone with his child because of conflict between the parents and the baby's mother. The family was also not available to supervise these visits. CEDARS provided staff to supervise the visits with the client, his baby, and the baby's mother so that the client could maintain a relationship with his son.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

CEDARS Emergency Shelter has consistently been able to provide staffing above the state-required 1:6 ratio, operating instead at a ratio of 1:4. This has allowed for additional normalcy-promoting opportunities for youth such as extended day trips, supervised visits, and other normalizing community-based activities. CEDARS will continue with these interventions to ensure normalcy for youth.



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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

On a weekly basis lead staff conduct house meetings where youth are asked which activities they would like to do and these are scheduled in subsequent weeks. One such example includes Urban Air trampoline park as a frequently requested outing that the youth participated in on multiple occasions.

Lead staff were also given two hours of plan time per week while other staff provided coverage for supervision of youth. During this plan time lead staff found local events that they knew were in line with youth interests, culture, and areas of interest. The youth attended a Japanese festival at the local University a few weeks ago. They attended a Juneteenth celebration hosted by another community agency. Youth were also able to attend local hockey and Husker football games including the Spring Game most recently.

Staff also create daily activities inside the Emergency Shelter facility including preparing and hosting an Easter egg hunt and weekly board game tournaments with games requested by youth in care. These schedules are posted weekly with activity options for each day.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

CEDARS Shelter has a program annual plan goal to continue to build relationships with other community partners that will increase options for community-based outings. It is the goal of CEDARS shelter management and lead staff to identify new and ongoing activity options for youth to participate in.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

In late 2023 a youth was placed with us following being assaulted while on run. She was able to use the elevator to more easily navigate the building due to her hip injury. She also had STIs causing severe pain in her throat, so the youth was provided a whiteboard that she used to communicate with staff.

Our Emergency Shelter supports youth with a variety of IEP accommodations and learning needs. These youth are provided individualized support which includes flexible seating, sensory items (fidgets, chewing gum), and sensory blocking tools (headphones). The youth are allowed to change the lighting in their areas, including: sitting closer to the windows; sitting in the corner with lights off; and using lamps to accommodate brain injury and sensory needs to help improve functioning. CEDARS has worked with the Brain Injury Alliance and Occupational Therapists from Madonna to learn about more accommodations that can be made to support various youth needs for learning.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No significant barriers were identified. CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter is committed to ongoing education and learning about additional resources and accommodations that can be made to meet individual youth needs.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter continues to work with UNL to help analyze outcome data to gain additional insight about the effectiveness of the new tiered programming structure. Recently, we had a youth admitted to Shelter that started in our "Courage" tier of the program. She completed her courses and graduated early from high school. CEDARS staff organized and threw a graduation party and provided her a cap and gown to take graduation pictures in. Upon graduating and demonstrating that she was developmentally prepared for employment the youth was supported to get a job. She gained employment and was provided with coaching on building a resume and job skills. She successfully maintained this employment until she was able to reunify with her mother and return home.

As another example, one staff took three youth to learn how to ride the bus. They selected a location they wanted to ride to and learned how to download the bus app, read the bus schedule, and locate bus stops. The staff traveled with the youth to help them safely learn these skills in a guided manner. After several different practice runs, the youth reported feeling confident using the bus system independently for transportation. Two of these youth were subsequently allowed to ride the bus to jobs and other outings as approved by their guardians.

CEDARS Pioneer Center Emergency Shelter consistently seeks to honor the individual needs and experiences of each youth served, specifically when it comes to youth's self-identities. CEDARS recently served a set of siblings. We were able to keep them together during their stay. Additionally, we served a female youth who wore her hair in a protective style. Shelter provided the materials and access to appointments needed in order to maintain this style to protect her natural hair.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter will continue work with our internal Continuous Quality Improvement team to assess the effectiveness of the program tiers as we refine this more individualized approach to service planning and program delivery. Over the last year, it was recognized that some youth may be required by court order to obtain employment but may not be developmentally prepared to have constant access to their cell phones so a fourth programming track/tier was developed called "Momentum" that supports youth who need employment while still maintaining a fairly high level of supervision. Ongoing review and assessment of this approach will be completed and monitored for effectiveness.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Over the past year, CEDARS internal CQI data identified that there was equitable admission decisions and equitable discharges for youth of color when compared to youth who identify as white. This is a direct result of intentional processes implemented by CEDARS Pioneers Center Emergency Shelter to ensure that admission and discharge decisions are free from as much bias as possible, including using a committee approach when choosing whether to give notice on a youth. Our team ensures that the "committee" includes diverse representation of our staff team when making these decisions.

Over the past year CEDARS Shelter, as part of their annual planning process, developed intentional relationships with other organizations in the community to help connect youth with mentors that reflect their demographics more closely. For example, one youth identified as a Latina female. She was able to join the Latina Leadership group at El Centro de las Americas and participated in leadership projects with other Latinx youth in our community.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Additional focus over the next year will be given to increase the frequency and variety of activities and celebrations that reflect the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of youth that we serve. We hope to continue to build additional partnerships with local organizations and institutions to increase our awareness of similar activities and groups that we can share with the kids in our care.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

The youth currently in Emergency Shelter participate in a weekly house meeting. During this meeting, they are able to identify outings, groups, and activities they want to complete on a weekly basis. All youth have been offered the opportunity to participate in the Community Youth Action Board.

We also offered the opportunity for youth to participate in monthly meetings with our staff and food services team to identify snacks, meals, and recipes that they enjoyed and that reflected their cultural foods. The youth were able to give input on menus on a monthly basis.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Continuing these new strategies identified this year will allow youth to continue to provide input on service delivery. Future opportunities for growth will be to inform youth in a more timely manner about Youth Action Board opportunities and meeting times to allow them to adjust their schedules to participate as their interest allows.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Allyson Rickertsen

Designee's Title: Program Director

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

The process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities under RPPS is posted in the common areas of both upper and lower Emergency Shelter. Youth have access to blank request forms and an envelope for collecting requests. Youth can make a verbal request to Emergency Shelter staff or an Emergency Shelter Case Manager at any time as well.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

This is posted in the common areas of both upper and lower Emergency Shelter.

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## Addendum for CEDARS Report

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

All youth who attend school in Lincoln were provided transportation daily to school. CEDARS provides educational support staff that contact schools following a youth's admittance to shelter to help establish re-entry meetings to help re-engage youth in schools when needed.

Last Thanksgiving, a court order prevented one youth from returning home for Thanksgiving. Instead the entire family including aunts, uncles, and cousins were invited to CEDARS and a large area was provided for the family to celebrate Thanksgiving together. The family brought all of their traditional and cultural foods and were able to celebrate the holidays together.

Siblings were removed from their home in the early hours of Christmas. These youth were known to celebrate Christmas. Staff worked with DHHS to identify youth interest and sizes and wrapped presents that were placed in their stockings/under the tree for when they arrived in the early morning hours so they had Christmas gifts to open despite their emergency placement on a holiday.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Child Saving Institute

Report Author:

Lisa Blunt

Author's Title:

Chief Operating Officer

Phone Number:

402-504-3609

Email Address:

lblunt@childsaving.org

Contract Date:

October 1, 2023 through September 20, 2024

Plan Date:

10/27/2023

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

CSI strives to provide a sense of "normalcy" for all youth served. Our staff works closely with the youths' caseworkers, parents, and other involved individuals to ensure they are registered at their home schools and prepared to attend classes throughout their shelter stays. We support and encourage family visits and home passes and maintain existing relationships with healthcare providers for medical, dental, and mental health needs. During a youth's stay at the shelter, it is required for all youth to participate in family team meetings, along with legal guardians, guardians ad litem, case managers and/or probation officers, CSI staff, and other involved professionals and informal supports. During these meetings, held at least once per week, the youth's progress toward individualized goals and barriers to goal attainment are discussed with the ultimate aim of supporting each youth's post-discharge success. Barriers to normalcy are addressed on an individual basis with each youth, with plans developed during family team meetings and implemented day-to-day. One barrier to normalcy is the variety of meals given to youth at dinner time that they may not be used to. One way this has been addressed is to allow youth to have input when making the weekly menu. Youth have been able to have "comfort foods" inserted into the menu along with the opportunity to cook them. Another barrier to normalcy is the limitations to entertainment that the youth have in the shelter. To address this, CSI provides a video game system and familiar (appropriate) games to play, along with the opportunity to watch TV during free time. Many youth enjoy playing cards and UNO and CSI provides cards and the staff often engage in games with the youth. CSI provides basic hygiene items but youth may also have preferred hygiene products that they used at home. CSI provides individual containers for each youth so that the youth's family can bring these preferred items to use at the shelter. CSI continuously updates policies and procedures. We are also in midst of a capital campaign that will support the construction of a new shelter, with upgraded educational and recreational space, for 16 youth. This facility will be complete in 2025.



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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

Every youth in the shelter is encouraged to bring in appropriate family photos and photos of friends. The youth can wear their own clothing, shop for clothing, wear makeup, fix their hair, and have access to flat/curling irons and blow dryers. Each youth has the ability to attend their home school and can attend after school functions such as sports, band, music, prom, homecoming, etc. and home passes and family visits are encouraged.

At the time of intake, all medical information is obtained, including the youth's primary physician. Medical, vision and dental appointments are made with the youth's current medical provider.

Programming is based on the youth's individualized needs, which are identified and discussed at the time of intake and during all scheduled family team meetings.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

Family team meetings are conducted with the youth, the youth's family, the youth's caseworker, the GAL, CSI staff, and others involved in the case as appropriate. During these meetings, an individualized plan is developed with the input of all parties, including the youths. All youth have access to parenting classes, independent living classes, and mental health services. Our program is incentive-based, and youth have a say in their incentives. Youth are also paid a weekly allowance for completing chores.

The CSI shelter works in collaboration with each youth's treatment team to identify specific needs and plans to meet those needs. For example, when a youth is identified as at risk of "aging out" of the child welfare system, independent living programming is provided by shelter staff and/or by referral. Changes are implemented dependent on the needs of each youth.

In addition, all youth participates in classes such as finance, cooking, and resume building. Staff work one-on-one with youth with lower IQ levels or other exceptional needs to ensure material is easily understood.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

The program director provides direct supervision to the shelter supervisors and key staff. Individual supervision is based on the need of the individual. In addition, shelter supervisors provide individual supervision to assigned shelter staff and informal coaching as they support activities of daily living. Necessary training is provided during biweekly team meetings. Staff are also trained in CPI so that they are equipped to handle volatile situations.

CSI provides 24/7 awake supervision and maintains a staff/youth ratio of 1:6 . Throughout the week, various activities based on age and developmental needs are offered to all youth. Because of the flexibility in programming, CSI is able to meet the needs of youth of various ages and developmental stages.

Timely, thorough staff training and supervision ensures a clear understanding of each youth's needs and ways to support success. Specifically, youth are informed of boundary policies to ensure that there is no horseplay and no touching between youth. Youth are not allowed in each other's doorways so that staff are able to maintain supervision of all interactions between youth.

All outings are staffed with more than one staff to ensure safety for everyone.

If a youth is placed on suicide watch, they are either in staff eyesight or checked on every 15 minutes while in their room. If there is a safety concern with a youth and their family, a plan will be implemented with the probation officer's involvement and if necessary, the visits will be supervised.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

CSI programming includes various outings. Examples include rollerskating, YMCA/gym, movies, parks, libraries, bike rides, baseball games, and other community events. In addition to off-site activities, shelter youth engage in a weekly group facilitated by a mental health practitioner and participate in board games, Ps4, arts and crafts, and other healthy activities.

CSI partnered with UNO's Service Learning community in the development of a host of healthy group activities inclusive of all youth. The menu of inclusive group activities will continue to be developed.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Each youth has an individualized service plans that are appropriate to the youths age and developmental stage and take disabilities into consideration as needed. All groups/activities are age and developmentally appropriate.

Upon shelter intake, information is obtained from all relevant parties, including probation officers, caseworkers, parents, therapists, school personnel, etc. A mental health practitioner and supervisory team review all available historical information and conduct a bio-psycho-social assessment. Each youth completes the ASEBA (Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment). The ASEBA offers a comprehensive approach to assessing adaptive and maladaptive functioning. Following the assessment process, the team works with each youth to develop age- and developmentally-appropriate goals.

No changes are anticipated during the next review period.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

CSI supports each youth in the establishment of individualized goals. Shelter staff meet the youth where they are both mentally and emotionally.

Youth served in CSI's shelter are met with openness, understanding, and compassion.

Example: We do not speak about a youths' charges as the charges do not define the youth. We teach to the behaviors that led them to receive these charges and open their eyes to fun, prosocial activities that are healthy, legal, and build healthy relationships.

Bi-weekly staff meetings give the staff the opportunity to discuss any concerns with a particular youth so that their needs can be met in the best way possible. If necessary, these discussions will involve probation officers or DHHS

Caseworkers in ensure that the youth's needs are being met.

Staff also have the opportunity to send group emails if they are observing any concerns with a particular youth. This alerts the team to the concern so that it can be addressed in a timely manner.

One example is the tracking of attendance at school. If a youth is often marked absent in their classes, the CSI tutor will talk to the youth and contact the school administrator to see what the issue. In one example, the tutor arranged for a meeting at the school that included the family, probation, and the IEP team, to discuss the absences from class and a solution.

Another youth that came to CSI was being home-schooled at home. The tutor obtained the curriculum that his family was using and provided the same instruction to the youth that he was getting at home. With permission from the youth's family, the youth's district school was also involved and will be doing academic testing so that the youth will have the best educational support possible.

Finally, CSI has had youth that do not speak much English. In this case, CSI uses translators, a translating app, and utilize staff that speak their native language to make sure that the youth's needs are being met. CSI also has allowed these particular youth to bring specific food from home that they are familiar with, to eat if they do not like the meal that is provided.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

CSI has had an active Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) team since 2009. The membership of this team is diverse in regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and department membership. The team helps to facilitate a welcoming and inclusive program delivery system and work environment. This team has brought many training opportunities to agency staff. The shelter director is the co-chair to the agency's DEI committee and member of the Alternatives to Detention (ATD) committee in Douglas County.

Disproportionate impact continues to be an area of great concern. The CSI shelter accepts referred youth regardless of color and other attributes. The program director addresses disproportionate impact within the community through participation in committees such as Alternatives to Detention and RED (Racial and Ethnic Disparities).

Continue to gain knowledge and resources in order to help youth and families experience success.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

CSI youth regularly discuss desired changes daily during groups facilitated by shelter staff. Youth also have input on menus, outings, and daily/weekly activities within the boundaries of a solid and appropriate structure provided by shelter staff.

Our youth "board" consists of all current shelter youth, staff, and supervisors. Every day, youth provide input on activities and appropriate topics of discussion. A daily meeting occurs at 4:00pm. Additionally, every month a youth survey is distributed. The anonymous survey collects youth input about how staff support them, desired changes, etc. Each survey is reviewed and, if changes are needed, the director proceeds with the implementation and updates the shelter's policies and procedures.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Child Saving Institute

Report Author:

Teffany Ulrich

Author's Title:

Program Director

Phone Number:

402.504.3618

Email Address:

tulrich@childsaving.org

Report Date:

April 30, 2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☐ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

Barriers to normalcy are addressed on an individual basis with each youth, with plans developed during family team meetings and implemented day-to-day.

One barrier to normalcy is the variety of meals given to youth at dinner time that they may not be used to. One way this has been addressed is to allow youth to have input when making the weekly menu. Youth have been able to have "comfort foods" inserted into the menu along with the opportunity to cook them.

Another barrier to normalcy is the limitations to entertainment that the youth have in the shelter. To address this, CSI provides a video game system and familiar (appropriate) games to play, along with the opportunity to watch TV during free time. Many youth enjoy playing cards and UNO and CSI provides cards and the staff often engage in games with the youth.

CSI provides basic hygiene items but youth may also have preferred hygiene products that they used at home. CSI provides individual containers for each youth so that the youth's family can bring these preferred items to use at the shelter.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

CSI continuously updates policies and procedures. We are also in midst of a capital campaign that will support the construction of a new shelter, with upgraded educational and recreational space, for 16 youth. This facility will be complete in 2025.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

See Addendum

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are planned during the next reporting period.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

The CSI shelter works in collaboration with each youth's treatment team to identify specific needs and plans to meet those needs. For example, when a youth is identified as at risk of "aging out" of the child welfare system, independent living programming is provided by shelter staff and/or by referral.

In addition, all youth participates in classes such as finance, cooking, and resume building. Staff work one-on-one with youth with lower IQ levels or other exceptional needs to ensure material is easily understood.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes are implemented dependent on the needs of each youth.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

Timely, thorough staff training and supervision ensures a clear understanding of each youth's needs and ways to support success.

Specifically, youth are informed of boundary policies to ensure that there is no horseplay and no touching between youth. Youth are not allowed in each other's doorways so that staff are able to maintain supervision of all interactions between youth.

All outings are staffed with more than one staff to ensure safety for everyone.

If a youth is placed on suicide watch, they are either in staff eyesight or checked on every 15 minutes while in their room.

If there is a safety concern with a youth and their family, a plan will be implemented with the probation officer's involvement and if necessary, the visits will be supervised.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are anticipated during the next review period.



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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

CSI partnered with UNO's Service Learning community in the development of a host of healthy group activities inclusive of all youth. CSI also partners with Summer Fun Program with activities taking place during the summer months. Those activities include but not limited Petting Zoo at Scatter Joy Acres, No More Empty Pots, Soccer Camp, Mahoney, Lauritzen Gardens, STEM at UP, Wildlife Safari and many more outings.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

The menu of inclusive group activities will continue to be developed.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

Upon shelter intake, information is obtained from all relevant parties, including probation officers, caseworkers, parents, therapists, school personnel, etc. A mental health practitioner and supervisory team review all available historical information and conduct a bio-psycho-social assessment. Each youth completes the ASEBA (Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment). The ASEBA offers a comprehensive approach to assessing adaptive and maladaptive functioning. Following the assessment process, the team works with each youth to develop age- and developmentally-appropriate goals.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are anticipated during the next review period.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

Youth served in CSI's shelter are met with openness, understanding, and compassion.

Example: We do not speak about a youths' charges as the charges do not define the youth. We teach to the behaviors that led them to receive these charges and open their eyes to fun, pro-social activities that are healthy, legal, and build healthy relationships.

Bi-weekly staff meetings give the staff the opportunity to discuss any concerns with a particular youth so that their needs can be met in the best way possible. If necessary, these discussions will involve probation officers or DHHS Caseworkers in ensure that the youth's needs are being met.

Staff also have the opportunity to send group emails if they are observing any concerns with a particular youth. This alerts the team to the concern so that it can be addressed in a timely manner.

One example is the tracking of attendance at school. If a youth is often marked absent in their classes, the CSI tutor will talk to the youth and contact the school administrator to see what the issue. In one example, the tutor arranged for a meeting at the school that included the family, probation, and the IEP team, to discuss the absences from class and a solution.

Another youth that came to CSI was being home-schooled at home. The tutor obtained the curriculum that his family was using and provided the same instruction to the youth that he was getting at home. With permission from the youth's family, the youth's district school was also involved and will be doing academic testing so that the youth will have the best educational support possible.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are anticipated during the next review period.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Disproportionate impact continues to be an area of great concern. The CSI shelter accepts referred youth regardless of color and other attributes. The program director addresses disproportionate impact within the community through participation in committees such as Alternatives to Detention and RED (Racial and Ethnic Disparities).

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Continue to gain knowledge and resources in order to help youth and families experience success.

---

**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

Our youth "board" consists of all current shelter youth, staff, and supervisors. Every day, youth provide input on activities and appropriate topics of discussion. A daily meeting occurs at 4:00pm. Additionally, every month a youth survey is distributed. The anonymous survey collects youth input about how staff support them, desired changes, etc. Each survey is reviewed and, if changes are needed, the director proceeds with the implementation and updates the shelter's policies and procedures.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes are anticipated during the next review period.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Teffany Ulrich

Designee's Title: Program Director

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

During the daily Community Meetings, we want to promote an environment where we support each other and create a favorable living situation for everyone. Each shift, youth, and staff meet as a community. During these meetings, all will ask themselves these questions: How am I feeling? What is my goal? Who can support me? What activity would benefit all? What future activity would you love to participate in? At designated times, we will sit down as a community and reflect on our day, revisiting the above-mentioned questions. When planning our activities, we encourage all participants to draw from their personal experiences within the community.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

The above is included in our Youth Handbook and will be posted on our shelter wall.

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## **CSI Normalcy Report Addendum**

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

### **1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

When youth enter the shelter, most are struggling in school and need more credits to graduate successfully and on time. Currently, youth attend their home schools or, if suspended, work individually and in groups with a tutor. The CSI tutor maintains daily communication with community schools, the youths' families, DHHS caseworkers, probation officer, and therapists, ensuring all are aware of the youths' progress. The youth are allowed to work on homework and use their school issued iPad or a laptop to access the Internet while supervised.

There is a basketball hoop outside in the CSI parking lot which allows youth to continue to play a sport that they are familiar with. Youth are also allowed to go to the YMCA, and the park (if weather permits) so that they can get exercise and recreation.

Youth have the opportunity to purchase familiar food from a restaurant from their chore allowance. A youth's family also has the opportunity to bring familiar food while they are visiting the youth.

If a youth previously held employment and is approved to continue, CSI supports the opportunity for the youth to continue working by helping transport. If a youth is approved to begin employment, CSI provides support in the form of helping with applications, resumes, and mock interviews so that the youth will be successful in finding employment that they are interested in.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Independence Rising - Kyle L Britt Transitional Shelter

Report Author:

Sarah Hampton

Author's Title:

Deputy Programs Director

Phone Number:

608-769-4248

Email Address:

[sjones@irnebraska.org](mailto:sjones@irnebraska.org)

Contract Date:

10-01-23

Plan Date:

12-20-23

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

Independence Rising views normalcy as an inclusive setting and environment for all youth residing in the Independence Rising emergency shelter. This means that regardless of age, gender, and program (respite, probation, or DHHS) all children will be treated equally. Equal treatment includes normalizing the same rules, daily procedure, and inclusive settings so that children are among a group of their peers as much as possible. Normalcy also includes meeting the unique needs and situations of each child, which includes addressing behaviors, needs for requested time alone, and other needs as identified by service provider or staff at the agency.



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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

There is a designated visitation schedule for each child that is residing at the shelter. This schedule will take into consideration the parent and family member schedule, as well as scheduling around the children's appointments in order for family members to visit the children as allowed and appropriate. The unique needs of each child will be addressed by each agency staff in order to fulfill the individual needs of each child in the areas of relationships, technology, education, school, and health care. A document of each child's individual needs as they pertain to this will be documented and placed in their file.

All basic needs of each child (mentally, physically, emotionally) will be addressed. We can bring in outside resources to aid with meeting their needs if they go beyond what the shelter can provide.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

The designated agency staff will work with the placing agency staff on identifying needs for each child in this area. Based on those needs, plans will be developed and as appropriate with the input of the parents, child, and agency staff in order to develop a plan that meets these needs of each unique youth. These plan goals will be documented at least daily in order to determine goal progression as well as the need to modify, change, or enhance the plans as required and appropriately requested. Plan information will be provided to appropriate individuals. Agency staff will attend team meetings as appropriate and requested.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

Agency staff are well trained in the activities, programs, and offerings at the shelter site. Youth will not be required to spend time unsupervised, as well as on outings that are not school related. Staff meetings will be held ongoing in order to staff each youth and their goals in these areas to ensure each youth is being offered appropriate services by the shelter.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

Daily activities will be offered and scheduled around any school, counseling, etc. These activities will be scheduled to promote crafts, goal setting, self regulation of behaviors, social development skills, reflection, daily living skill development and self esteem building. We will also offer a variety of services to come in to the shelter as available including church services, yoga, dance lessons, art, activities, etc. As safe and appropriate, staff will take youth on outings for swimming, museums, etc.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Independence Rising also offers grant funded independent living services for people with disabilities so the agency has a wealth of knowledge in this area and train staff accordingly. Based on individual disabilities of the child, whether developmental, intellectual, physical, or co-occurring, the agency is equipped and ready to appropriately serve individuals with disabilities in the inclusive environment. This may include modifying reading and writing activities so that children can be successful regardless of their skill level in this area, explaining directions in a manner that's understandable to each child, posting schedules and information in the shelter for daily activities, rules, and chores that includes pictures as well as words, so that all children can understand the direction. Finally, developing a plan and addressing any other unique needs and goals of children with disabilities.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

Each child will have their individual needs and goals considered with the input of agency staff, parents, and the child themselves as appropriate. All children will reside in the inclusive environment, however, planning consideration and program development will be given to the needs and goals of each individual child.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

This shelter is in a rural part of Nebraska and the diversity of population is not as prevalent as it is in more urban areas of the state. However, the shelter will offer services statewide and as minority children reside at the shelter, the agency will work towards identifying the needs of the diverse population, as well as meeting those needs for each unique child. For example, if the child is African American, Native American, etc. Agency staff will be trained on the culture and how to best work with these populations.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

Select agency staff within Independence Rising have been trained on the development of a youth board with transition age youth for decision making activities. Plans are underway to develop a youth board. Specific to the shelter, the agency has staff employed that have peer experiences that would be applicable to youth population served by the shelter. These staff, as well as outside youth that do not work for the agency, will be asked to work towards development of a volunteer advisory board to address the prudent parent standard.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Independence Rising - Kyle L Britt Transitional Shelter

Report Author:

Sarah Hampton

Author's Title:

Deputy Programs Director

Phone Number:

608-769-4248

Email Address:

[sjones@irnebraska.org](mailto:sjones@irnebraska.org)

Report Date:

04-30-24

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

Independence Rising has implemented a daily schedule for the weekend days and a daily schedule for the weekdays. We had a youth that was diagnosed and struggled with following the same schedule as everyone else so we made him his own schedule with pictures that he could follow.

Youth at our shelter also have "pink cards" that they can hold up when they need a break to let staff and other youth know they are needing a break and requesting their alone time.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

We have utilized zoom meetings for therapy when the therapist is a distance away, we have brought in an art teacher to help facilitate classes. For holiday activities we have tried to normalize those for the youth by dying easter eggs, creating gingerbread houses, and singing carols.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

We had a youth that was expelled from school and our staff worked with the placing agency on getting him enrolled in a virtual school.

We have another youth that struggles with reading and writing, so our staff sit with this youth and assist him with his virtual education. We have also purchased flash cards to work with with him individually.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

We have added additional staff for outings when needed or when we have had higher needs youth. We had a youth that required 1:1 care so we utilized extra staff for that. We have an art teacher that comes in to the facility once a week and we have used additional staff during that time as well.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.



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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

We have worked with staff on providing full supervision on outings. We have taken the youth to the YMCA, rec center, bowling, and out to eat. We have asked each of the youth where they would like to go on outings so we can try to accomodate each youth as best as we can.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed. We have asked the youth specifically where they would like to go and what activities they would like to be involved in. We will implement these as appropriate.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

We had a youth with Autism that we provided additional staff for as he worked better in a 1:1 setting. We also created a schedule specific to him with pictures as he did better when he could see pictures of what was upcoming for his day.

We currently have a youth that struggles to read and write. We have a staff member that sits with that youth during his school to assist him as she's able to. We have purchased flash cards and have utilized those to assist with his learning.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

We have created individualized schedules for youth with developmental disabilities. We have created pictures for the schedules for youth who are unable to read or write.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

We had a youth that was self-conscious about her hair and always wanted to wear a beanie style hat. We allowed her to do this despite not typically allowing hats to be worn indoors. We also bought a dream catcher activity where the youth had the opportunity to make dream catchers and learn about these.

Our activities are inclusive and are appropriate for youth of color. We have books in the library on the different cultures and historical figures representing all ethnic groups.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

At this time we have not identified any barriers or changes being needed.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

We are in the planning stages of developing the youth board. We have youth that come in and out of the shelter on a fairly regular basis as we are a short term shelter facility. We do nightly reflections with the youth and during this time we ask them different questions of what they would like to see changed, implemented, or added.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

We will continue to work on the development of the youth board.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Cory Tatman

Designee's Title: House Manager

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

The youth have every day to participate in developmental and age appropriate activities throughout the day. These include universal activities such as sketching, journaling, art, reading, video gaming (used with supervision), and outings (rec center, swimming, bowling, arcade game room). The peers vote on what they want to do at the end of each week for the following week. They also have their own individual opportunities during free time and the scheduled times.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

Our written notice is on the schedule which is posted on refrigerator and each youth is given a schedule to keep with them upon their arrival. We also have it posted on every floor throughout the house.

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Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Normalcy Plan

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Norfolk Group Home

Report Author: Shelly McGrath	Author's Title: Administrator and Owner
Phone Number: 402-379-0295	Email Address: nghnet1@gmail.com
Contract Date:	Plan Date: 3/31/2024

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

When the Norfolk Group Home Staff make decisions regarding age or developmentally appropriate activities, the staff shall take into considerations:

- the residents age, maturity and developmental level
- the overall health and safety of the resident
- potential risk factors and appropriateness of the activity
- in the best interest of the resident
- promoting, where safe and as appropriate, normal childhood experiences
- the current status of the case plan, including impeding reunification
- the engagement level of the resident's parents
- the interest and desires of the resident
- Other relevant factors based on the staff's knowledge of the resident (history, issues, behaviors, concerns)

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

- any and all staff can make the decision for the "normalcy" for the residents at the group home
- at this time, the designees are Shelly McGrath and Brandy Thuernagle
- decisions that will need to be approved by the residents parent, state and/or the courts
- changes contrary to the residents or the families specific order of the court
- non-routine and non-emergency medical decisions
- returning the resident to their parent or guardian without court approval
- changing the residents religion
- international or out of state travel
- permanant changes to the residents appearance including but not limited to tattoos, piercings, cosmetic surgery or body modifications
- decisions contrary to their current case plan and permanency goal

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

When the Norfolk Group Home Staff make decisions regarding age or developmentally appropriate activities, the staff shall take into considerations:

- the residents age, maturity and developmental level
- the overall health and safety of the resident
- potential risk factors and appropriateness of the activity
- in the best interest of the resident
- promoting, where safe and as appropriate, normal childhood experiences
- the current status of the case plan, including impeding reunification
- the health and safety of the staff
- the engagement level of the resident's parents
- the interest and desires of the resident
- other relevant factors based on the staffs knowledge of the resident (history, issues, behaviors, concerns)



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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

- any and all staff can make the decision for the "normalcy" for the residents at the group home
- at this time, the designees are Shelly McGrath and Brandy Thuernagle
- decisions that will need to be approved by the resident's parent, state and/or the courts
- changes contrary to the residents or the families specific order of the court
- decisional contrary to their current case plan and permanency goal

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

-the group home has scheduled activities weekly at the group home including: ceramics, Youth Leadership, shopping, swimming, movies, games, crafts, arcade, bowling, out to eat, walks with staff, daily chores, basic independent living activities.

-all residents are aware of all extra curricular activities that are available at the Norfolk Public Schools. If a resident is interested staff will make every effort to have them participate in the activity. The Norfolk Group Home will transport if needed and approved by their caseworker and or probation officer/tribe.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

- changes contrary to the residents or the families specific order of the court
  - non-routine and non-emergency medical decisions
  - returning the resident to their parent or guardian without court approval
  - changing the residents religion
  - international or out of state travel
  - permanant changes to the residents appearance including but not limited to tattoos, piercings, cosmetic surgery or body modifications
  - decisions contrary to their current case plan and permanency goal
- The Norfolk Group home staff will make decisions that maintain the health, safety, and best interest of a child and to make normal, day-to-day decisions affecting children in our care regarding extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, social or sporting activities.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

When the Norfolk Group Home Staff make decisions regarding age or developmentally appropriate activities, the staff shall take into considerations:

- the residents age, maturity and developmental level
- the overall health and safety of the resident
- potential risk factors and appropriateness of the activity
- in the best interest of the resident
- promoting, where safe and as appropriate, normal childhood experiences
- the current status of the case plan, including impeding reunification
- the health and safety of the staff
- the engagement level of the resident's parents
- the interest and desires of the resident
- other relevant factors based on the staffs knowledge of the resident (history, issues, behaviors, concerns)

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

The Norfolk Group Home takes referrals from HHS, probation and tribes. None of which is denied because of color or other populations.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

The Norfolk Group Home has meetings with residents monthly to discuss any concerns. We are also participating in the Youth leadership group twice a month, put on by the Norfolk Family Coalition.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Nebraska Strengthening Families Act Normalcy Report

Good Life, Circle: M1ss,or

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/awslstatutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Norfolk Group Home, Inc.

Report Author: Shelly McGrath	Author's Title: Administrator
Phone Number: 402-379-0295	Email Address: nghnet1@gmail.com

Report Date:

04/06/2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

X October 1,2023 through March 31. 2024 April 1 , through September 30 \_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

- Getting each resident enrolled in public school
- Getting to watch shows online
- Daily phone calls with family when behaviors/attitude are appropriate
- Phone calls with friends.
- Spending time and/or overnights with friends
- Earning money while doing chores
- Encouraging residents to participate in extra-curricular activities provided by the Norfolk Public Schools such as choir, football, basketball, dances and games.
- Residents are able to find a part-time job if grades are good, and if they are age appropriate and on level 2.
- Encouraging residents to participate in volunteering
- Encouraging residents to participate in faith based activities

Recently a new resident was not doing well at her prior placement. We enrolled her here at High School. We encouraged her to try out for a team, she made first string and was so excited. Her grades went up to all A's and B's. She was so happy. We told her we would be going to all her games, she smiled and had tears in her eyes. She wanted a certain pair of tennis shoes. We went shopping and purchased them for her. I am hoping that our other residents follow in her footsteps.

This past year a resident had been self harming. Although she participates in individual therapy, we felt that she needed another outlet. She decided that she had an interest in a sport. She began to attend practices and participating in meets. She is excited that she has won so many of her matches. We are happy that we have not had

CFS-1215 9/2023

any recent incidents of self harming since she began.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

One barrier was that a resident wanted to volunteer. It is our policy that she be on Level 2 and be passing all her grades before volunteering. The resident stated that this would help her get better grades as she needed to be around and likes helping out. She had always had them in her life prior to being placed here. We decided to deviate from our policy and allow her to volunteer two days a week. The compromise was that once she brought her grades up, she would be allowed to volunteer more hours. Her grades improved and she spent more time volunteering, which also improved her attitude and behaviors.

---

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

- Each resident normalcy plan is based upon individual needs
- Offsite and onsite visits with family members and/or friends
- Home visits
- Paying for residents medication when insurance/Medicaid does not cover it.
- Using chrome books for school work, with staff supervision.
- Paying for extra-curricular activities.
- Purchasing clothing, shoes, backpacks and other needed items when a resident makes a request
- Providing a tutor to assist in attaining and maintaining passing grades.

We had a resident that was prescribed Melatonin to assist her in falling asleep. Medicaid does not cover Melatonin. We purchased the aid for her and she no longer has problems falling asleep.

We have had numerous residents that do not enjoy homework time. We hired a tutor to come in after school to assist the residents. She provides one on one assistance to the residents. She also makes every effort to encourage them to do better and to make study time fun.

We have numerous laptop computers. The residents enjoy using them to listen to music and for on-line shopping. We supervise their internet access, while at the same time allowing them to enjoy technology.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

No changes at this time.

We are addressing all of the resident's needs on an individual basis.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

- Participating in school activities
- Attaining employment when higher point levels are achieved
- Attending Artist Driven class provided by the Norfolk Arts Center
- Providing community service work to our residents that are court ordered
- Assisting the residents in spending their allowance on age appropriate items

We allow residents to perform court ordered community service within the facility. This includes doing organizational work in our "store". The store consists of clothing items of all styles and sizes. With the store being maintained, all residents are able to select needed items more easily and community service hours are achieved. If a resident does not want to perform community service at the residence, other locations are utilized within the community.

We have racks of various formal dresses in all styles and sizes. We keep them clean and well maintained. If a resident plans on attending Prom, Homecoming, Winter Royalty, etc., she is encouraged to select dresses of her choosing to try on. If alterations are necessary on a selected dress, we have the dress fitted specifically for the resident.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- None at this time
- We are listening to our individual residents wants, needs and interests and meeting their requests when appropriate.

---

**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

- Allowing attendance of school activities
- Allowing visits with family on and off site
- Staff taking residents to movies, bowling, swimming, shopping, the arcade, youth leadership group, ceramics
- Staff works with the resident when they are job searching online and in person, assisting with creating a resume and cover letter

We have residents that want to participate in family visitation. Sometimes, families do not have the resources to provide for things such as going out to eat or having the ability to pay for entertainment. We allow families to come to the residence and utilize the kitchen area. We often provide the groceries for the requested meal. When a family is participating in a family meal, the other residents are not allowed to interfere with the specific family time.

We also have a theater area in the lower level of the residence. Families often utilize this private space to watch movies and make popcorn, free of charge. This allows for the experience without incurring a cost.

We understand that friendships should be cultivated on an individual basis. Residents are allowed to spend the night with friends on non-school nights; provided they have prior consent. We make sure that the resident and friend are appropriate and that there is supervision within the home that is being visited. We recently allowed a resident to have her first overnight at a new friend's home. Upon returning, her attitude and behavior had notably improved. Because this incident went well, the resident will be allowed to spend the night with her friend again.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- none at this time
- We listen to our individual resident's wants, needs and interests and are meeting their requests when appropriate.



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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

-the Group Home has scheduled activities weekly at the group home. These include but are not limited to: ceramics, Youth Leadership, shopping, arcade, movies, swimming, dining out, walks with staff, daily chores and basic independent living activities.

On Tuesday evenings, the residents attend ceramics class. This is a staff supervised activity. Each resident is allowed to choose an item to paint. Once their item is complete, it is fired in a kiln. The residents are allowed to keep their completed projects or to give them as gifts as they see fit.

We purchase a season pass for the residents to attend the local water park each summer. The water park has a large pool with water activities available. The residents enjoy the water park as many of their outside friends enjoy interacting with each other there.

We provide a large swimming pool at the group home. It is located in a fenced in area, making it private. Residents enjoy the on-site pool and often sun bathe on the deck.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

-none at this time

-we are listening to our resident's needs, wants and interests and meeting their requests as appropriate

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

- the Norfolk Group Home follows the recommendations by HHS, Probation and Medical personnel
- Provide additional staff when necessary

We had a resident with a medical condition. Staff was provided training on what the condition entails and what signs to look for. The resident did not have a lot of interest in the medical condition. Staff made the process fun, while making sure that her medical needs were met.

We had a resident that required extra supervision due to severe outbursts. Additional staff was provided to allow one on one supervision and still allow for the resident to be a part of group home activities.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- none at this time
- no barriers are identified at this time

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

- These are determined during family Team meetings, contact with DHHS workers, Probation workers and tribal workers.
- When there are no family Team meetings and staff see that visitation needs to be increased, the group home staff makes that decision but also notifies all other workers of the same.
- Staff sets up doctor appointments, therapy appointments or any other medical appointments the residents require/request.

Recently we had a resident that belongs to the tribe. We made arrangements for her to attend the annual Pow-Wow. She reported that she really enjoyed watching and learning more about the native dances, language and beliefs.

We believe that each resident has unique and individual needs and wants. We train our staff to reach out to residents on a daily basis to inquire how they are getting along emotionally, physically and mentally. This is done in private so that each resident feels comfortable in sharing their true thoughts, emotions, needs and feelings.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- none at this time
- no barriers are identified at this time

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

- The Norfolk Group Home does not discriminate based on color, religion, etc. when accepting or denying referrals.
- The intake staff looks at the referral and decides if the referral would benefit from being placed at the group home or not.
- Intake staff considers the staff capabilities when accepting or denying a referral.
- Staff also takes into consideration the residents that are currently placed at the group home, making sure a new referral will not negatively impact our current residents.

We recently had a resident that was having trouble with her hair. We found a stylist that was trained in dealing with the hair type and made an appointment. Her self esteem rose dramatically with her extensions.

We have had numerous Hispanic residents at the group home. We encourage them to let staff know what food items are liked within their culture. We then find out how to prepare the dishes and often have Mexican night for dinner. We have had several incidents of resident's family members coming to the group home to both prepare a meal and to teach staff and other residents how to prepare the same.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- none at this time
- no barriers are identified at this time

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

- During the group home monthly meetings, the residents are able to discuss new activities, interests, rules and consequences and other topics.
- During Youth Leadership the residents are learning the skills needed to advocate for themselves.

Because our group home population is relatively small, we utilize the monthly meetings to cover the topics listed above. Occasionally, we will hold bi-monthly meetings if there are new problems or concerns that arise. This system has proven to work very well for us. Residents enjoy being part of the process of any change and enjoy giving their own input.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

- We will be adding more self-sufficient activities that residents can do by themselves, such as crafts, exercising and obtaining employment.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designated Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Shelly McGrath

Designated Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Administrator/Owner

---

Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

We have request papers, requesting the activity the youth wants to participate in. They are to fill this out and turn in to staff for approval or denial. This is explained to the resident at admission. The request forms are placed in the office on the wall. The residents may also ask verbally, we would then have them fill out the form and give to staff.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

In the office posted on file cabinet and in the hall way where the residents do they hair and make-up.

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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

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Normalcy Plan due within 30 days of sub award being signed and Normalcy Report due April 30 annually (send to your agency's contract monitor).

\* If no subaward with Nebraska DHHS, Normalcy Plan due October 31 and Normalcy Report due April 30 annually.

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Agency Name:

OHB

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Reporting Person, Title:

Ross Wendel, Sr. Manager of Quality Improvement

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Email contact:

[rwendel@ohb.org](mailto:rwendel@ohb.org)

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Date of Report:

April 15, 2024

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Reporting Year:

2024

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General Instructions:

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Please use this template to:

- 1) Answer **Normalcy Plan** questions first.
- 2) Answer **Normalcy Report** questions when due, using the same copy that includes your Normalcy Plan answers.

\*If more room is needed for answers, please use a separate sheet of paper.

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Form continued next page

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**Requirement 1: Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting**

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**Plan Question 1(a): What is your agency's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.

All OHB direct care staff members are trained in the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards prior to working with youth.

Home visits and family engagement are a central and vital element of each youth's individualized service plan. We have continued these in light of COVID

OHB addresses normalcy on a monthly basis in the Youth Advocate monthly meeting.

OHB collects data related to normalcy through Safety & Satisfaction surveys every six months. Results of the Safety & Satisfaction surveys are used to inform the policies and procedures of the Omaha Home for Boys.

Youth are encouraged to engage in various extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities through the use of open negotiation with direct care staff members as part of the their individualized service plan at OHB.

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**Report Question 1(b): Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your agency and provide a few examples:**

Youth have been given many opportunities to showcase leadership skills by planning events in school and youth council. Youth have the ability to have regular weekly face to face contact with family and home passes monthly, at a minimum. Youth are encouraged to participate in outings and have the ability to gain employment off campus. Youth are always able to contact their parent/guardian via phone. OHB also utilizes a privilege system that parents and homes use to mimic the home setting. OHB youth have access to multiple gaming systems, the ability to play basketball outside, access to bikes/skateboards, using the phone, watching tv, etc. OHB allows youth to use their cell phone as a privilege. Youth are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activities off campus and participate in athletics in their home school if possible. Youth have the opportunity to participate in tech skills youth employment program to gain experience in trades.



---

**Report Question 1(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

Our agency plan is going to continue to evolve and change over time. We are always going to have to adjust to changes and the needs of our residents. We will always work to ensure youth in our care have those similar experiences and ability to do the typical activities that other youth their age and maturity experience. We encourage youth to express their feelings appropriately and request permission for any privileges or activities they would like to participate in.

---

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine

---

**Plan Question 2(a):** What is your agency's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency, to address the items in requirement 2?

- A Technology Policy and Technology Procedure have been instituted at OHB. This policy & procedure outlines the following:
- All OHB homes are equipped with a computer.
- Internet usage is provided by OHB in the homes.
- All OHB homes are equipped with entertainment stations, including television and gaming devices.
- OHB clients have the privilege to have a cell phone. Use of the cell phone is a privilege based on the Motivation System the client is on.
- Education is provided by OHB in a self-contained, on campus school.
- The OHB School provides online high school for each student.
- Youth that have graduated have the option to access college classes on-line on campus. (Metro Technical Community College)
- All physical, dental, and mental health services for clients are referred outside the agency to professional providers in the community under the consent of parent/guardian and/or placing agency. OHB makes every effort to arrange medical care with the resident's established primary care physician, dentist, and mental health practitioner when applicable.
- OHB has a Medical Treatment Policy and Procedure to give guidance and satisfactory care for each youth.

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**Report Question 2(b):** Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your agency and provide a few examples:

At OHB we are constantly updating our privilege menu, adding technology, and/or gaming systems that are popular. We recently purchased nintendo switches to be used by our homes, youth also have the ability to play video games, watch netflix, and use their cell phones. Youth are allowed to earn the right to TV privileges in their rooms on weekends. Each youth has access to a computer at each program site, and an OHB school on campus where they can practice interacting in educational software.

We work very closely with our youth's home school district to ensure our youth are focusing on credits that are needing to reach graduation and if accommodations are needed that we are providing those to help ensure stability and success in the school setting. Our school has increased access to physical education classes and earn a credit through participation. Youth participate in weekly career exploration activities. Youth that graduate high school on our OHB school are celebrated with a ceremony and party in our OHB Dining Hall.

We partner closely with Nebraska Medicine for all their health needs. Each youth and their family are involved in all of their health care requests. Youth have the right to self-determination for all medical treatment including which medications they take. Staff are trained to monitor youth health and facilitate access to care as needed.

---

**Report Question 2(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to listen to our youth and update our privilege menu to meet the wishes of youth when possible. We want them to participate in all home processes and their input is strongly desired. We will continue to solicit feedback from youth through the Youth Council and weekly Restorative Justice circles to discover youth wants/needs.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution

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**Plan Question 3(a):** What is your agency's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process, to address requirement 3?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences provided to the youth we serve.
- All plans are individualized, based on the strengths, goals, and input of the youth and their families.
- Client Rights are utilized to help promote normalcy.

---

**Report Question 3(b):** Report how you successfully developed procedures for goals and action steps related to the ages and developmental activities for the children at the agency and please provide a few examples:

We encourage youth to provide input and perspective on their treatment and target skills. Youth and families drive decision-making and identify what is needed for the family to be successful. We hold frequent meetings to consistently discuss progress and changes that need to be implemented. For our Crisis Stabilization program, Family Team Meetings are held weekly to solicit feedback from parents and youth so that the case plan includes their input. Youth feedback is solicited to increase privileges that will motivate them to achieve their goals.

---

**Report Question 3(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to use weekly Restorative Justice meetings as a way to make improvements. We will also look ot refine our newly instituted incentive program where youth can earn tickets to purchase items for positive behaviors.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard

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**Plan Question 4(a):** What is your agency's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- All staff are trained in the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards.
- OHB staff will provide supervision and guidance in regard to appropriate activities.
  - OHB encourages input from parents/guardians and referring agencies for when determining activities in which a youth can engage. While input from parents/guardians is encouraged, OHB staff are still empowered to make decisions regarding participation in other activities.

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**Report Question 4(b):** Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities and please provide a few examples:

Staff are trained on policies and procedures as well as Reasonable Prudent Parenting Standards. Staff receive onboarding training as well as refreshers on policies and procedures, and program rules related to RPPS. Staff have the opportunity to provide feedback to the leadership team at 30, 60, and 90s following hire. As managers, we meet regularly through supervision and staff meetings. We also provide 24 hour on call to direct-care staff in the event that they need questions answered.

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**Report Question 4(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency's plan going forward?

OHB has returned to a centralized trainer for all onboarding training in order to assure training is standardized, effective, and meaningful. We have instituted OHB University to streamline training for all staff members based on the needs and requirements for each position.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access

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**Plan Question 5(a):** What is your agency's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?

- OHB continually collaborates with community partners to identify practical and accessible activities for the youth we serve. We will annually review our "menu" of activities and experiences to assess for areas of improvement.

---

**Report Question 5(b):** Report how you successfully created a list of activities for onsite and the community and provide a few examples of these activities:

We have a recreation center on site that youth have the ability to utilize daily. Our programs have an operating budget to plan for group events such as movie nights, bowling, or eating out. Each youth has the ability to earn money through youth employment and incentives and can earn the privilege to purchase their own items and/or pay their way for their own events.

We partner and collaborate with other agencies that assist us in providing different experiences that our youth may not have ever experienced. We work with community donors and partners to get youth into the community and exposed to different activities. Youth have access to an indoor swimming pool at least once a week. Youth have the opportunity participate in a community track team. Youth participate in career exploration activities. Youth plan activities such as bridge building competition, a bake sale fundraiser Souper Bowl, cooking classes.

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**Report Question 5(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

OHB will continue to explore and create new partnerships with community providers.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers

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**Plan Question 6(a):** What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?

- OHB utilizes an individualized treatment planning process for all youth being served. Accommodations are made to support those with disabilities and special needs on an individualized basis with regards to participation in developmentally appropriate activities.

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**Report Question 6(b):** Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities and please provide a few examples:

We work closely with parents guardians and treatment providers to ensure all our youth needs are met. We work with schools and other institutions to allow youth to have the services they need if that is something we cannot provide.

---

**Report Question 6(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

None at this time.



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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system

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**Plan Question 7(a):** What is your agency's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children at your agency are being met?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences provided to the youth we serve.
- OHB provides services for the youth to talk to a representative about their youth records. The representative is from the organization, Juvenile Re-Entry Program.

---

**Report Question 7(b):** Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your agency and provide a few examples:

Our treatment plans are individualized based on youth needs and we do not take a one size fits all approach. We are constantly receiving input from the youth and families on how to improve and what their needs are. Our specialists work closely with the families to design programming around the youth including their goals, passes, education needs, activities, etc.

Our new ticket incentive program allows them to earn new incentives that can be motivating and rewarding.

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**Report Question 7(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to solicit feedback from youth and families through surveys, Family Team Meetings, Youth Council, and Restorative Justice circles.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations

---

**Plan Question 8(a):** What is your agency's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?

- Staff at OHB receive training on various topics including Cultural Diversity, Trauma-Informed Care, and Policies & Procedures.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences on an individual basis with youth we serve.
- OHB offers services such as transportation to and from home passes.
- Therapy for substance abuse and gang involvement.
- Invite families to campus to visit.
- Weekly contact with the guardians.
- Weekly on campus therapy is provided.

---

**Report Question 8(b):** Report how you successfully have reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations and provide a few examples:

We strive to have our workforce reflect the population of the youth we serve. Our Youth Advocates are very diverse and represent a broad range of cultural backgrounds. All staff participate in DEI training annually. We collaborate with other agencies and ensure that our staff are extremely well trained. We serve the north Omaha community and are a pillar in the Benson area. Our program is set in an area that youth are familiar with and the families can easily access. Our services are set up to assist youth not just while they are with us but ongoing as well.

---

**Report Question 8(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We have implemented a new DEI training quarterly for the year and enlisted an outside training from UNO to help educate our staff. We will continue to solicit feedback from youth and families through surveys, family team meetings, Youth Council, and Restorative Justice circles.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy

---

**Plan Question 9(a):** What is your agency's plan to put forth an effort in developing a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?

OHB has a Youth Council that meets Monthly. The Youth Council is a peer ran program where they exercicse leadership skills and provided a space to has a voice in OHB programs, services, activities, and experiences.

Each program home has nightly table meetings where youth can discuss day to day programming and express their wants and needs.

Restorative Justice groups meet once a week to resolve conflict and issues arise. The meetings are a place where they can have their voices heard.

---

**Report Question 9(b):** Report how your agency has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy and please provide a few examples:

We have implemented a Youth Council that meets monthly. Staff faciliate the meeting, but it is designed to be youth focused and driven. Staff will continue to evaluate processes so that the Youth Council can accomplish it's goals and be effective. All staff are invited to participate in events organized by the Youth Council. In it's time the Youth Council has addressed issues such as staff tolerance levels, youth bullying, and planned events such as a bake sale fundraiser, and a youth/staff billiards tournament.

---

**Report Question 9(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We would love to expand our membership to more OHB programs and have involvement from OHB alumni. We are working with an outside agency to include workshops about civic engagement and community advocacy in our Youth Council meetings.

Electronic Signature of Person Completing Form: Ross Wendel	Date of Electronic Signature: 4-15-2024
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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

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Normalcy Plan due within 30 days of sub award being signed and Normalcy Report due April 30 annually (send to your agency's contract monitor).

\* If no subaward with Nebraska DHHS, Normalcy Plan due October 31 and Normalcy Report due April 30 annually.

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Agency Name:

OHB

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Reporting Person, Title:

Ross Wendel, Sr. Manager of Quality Improvement

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Email contact:

[rwendel@ohb.org](mailto:rwendel@ohb.org)

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Date of Report:

April 15, 2024

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Reporting Year:

2024

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General Instructions:

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Please use this template to:

- 1) Answer **Normalcy Plan** questions first.
- 2) Answer **Normalcy Report** questions when due, using the same copy that includes your Normalcy Plan answers.

\*If more room is needed for answers, please use a separate sheet of paper.

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Form continued next page

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**Requirement 1: Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting**

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**Plan Question 1(a): What is your agency's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.

All OHB direct care staff members are trained in the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards prior to working with youth.

Home visits and family engagement are a central and vital element of each youth's individualized service plan. We have continued these in light of COVID

OHB addresses normalcy on a monthly basis in the Youth Advocate monthly meeting.

OHB collects data related to normalcy through Safety & Satisfaction surveys every six months. Results of the Safety & Satisfaction surveys are used to inform the policies and procedures of the Omaha Home for Boys.

Youth are encouraged to engage in various extracurricular, enrichment, cultural, and social activities through the use of open negotiation with direct care staff members as part of the their individualized service plan at OHB.

---

**Report Question 1(b): Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your agency and provide a few examples:**

Youth have been given many opportunities to showcase leadership skills by planning events in school and youth council. Youth have the ability to have regular weekly face to face contact with family and home passes monthly, at a minimum. Youth are encouraged to participate in outings and have the ability to gain employment off campus. Youth are always able to contact their parent/guardian via phone. OHB also utilizes a privilege system that parents and homes use to mimic the home setting. OHB youth have access to multiple gaming systems, the ability to play basketball outside, access to bikes/skateboards, using the phone, watching tv, etc. OHB allows youth to use their cell phone as a privilege. Youth are encouraged to participate in extra curricular activities off campus and participate in athletics in their home school if possible. Youth have the opportunity to participate in tech skills youth employment program to gain experience in trades.

---

**Report Question 1(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

Our agency plan is going to continue to evolve and change over time. We are always going to have to adjust to changes and the needs of our residents. We will always work to ensure youth in our care have those similar experiences and ability to do the typical activities that other youth their age and maturity experience. We encourage youth to express their feelings appropriately and request permission for any privileges or activities they would like to participate in.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine

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**Plan Question 2(a):** What is your agency's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency, to address the items in requirement 2?

- A Technology Policy and Technology Procedure have been instituted at OHB. This policy & procedure outlines the following:
- All OHB homes are equipped with a computer.
- Internet usage is provided by OHB in the homes.
- All OHB homes are equipped with entertainment stations, including television and gaming devices.
- OHB clients have the privilege to have a cell phone. Use of the cell phone is a privilege based on the Motivation System the client is on.
- Education is provided by OHB in a self-contained, on campus school.
- The OHB School provides online high school for each student.
- Youth that have graduated have the option to access college classes on-line on campus. (Metro Technical Community College)
- All physical, dental, and mental health services for clients are referred outside the agency to professional providers in the community under the consent of parent/guardian and/or placing agency. OHB makes every effort to arrange medical care with the resident's established primary care physician, dentist, and mental health practitioner when applicable.
- OHB has a Medical Treatment Policy and Procedure to give guidance and satisfactory care for each youth.



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**Report Question 2(b):** Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your agency and provide a few examples:

At OHB we are constantly updating our privilege menu, adding technology, and/or gaming systems that are popular. We recently purchased nintendo switches to be used by our homes, youth also have the ability to play video games, watch netflix, and use their cell phones. Youth are allowed to earn the right to TV privileges in their rooms on weekends. Each youth has access to a computer at each program site, and an OHB school on campus where they can practice interacting in educational software.

We work very closely with our youth's home school district to ensure our youth are focusing on credits that are needed to reach graduation and if accommodations are needed that we are providing those to help ensure stability and success in the school setting. Our school has increased access to physical education classes and earn a credit through participation. Youth participate in weekly career exploration activities. Youth that graduate high school on our OHB school are celebrated with a ceremony and party in our OHB Dining Hall.

We partner closely with Nebraska Medicine for all their health needs. Each youth and their family are involved in all of their health care requests. Youth have the right to self-determination for all medical treatment including which medications they take. Staff are trained to monitor youth health and facilitate access to care as needed.

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**Report Question 2(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to listen to our youth and update our privilege menu to meet the wishes of youth when possible. We want them to participate in all home processes and their input is strongly desired. We will continue to solicit feedback from youth through the Youth Council and weekly Restorative Justice circles to discover youth wants/needs.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution

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**Plan Question 3(a):** What is your agency's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process, to address requirement 3?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences provided to the youth we serve.
- All plans are individualized, based on the strengths, goals, and input of the youth and their families.
- Client Rights are utilized to help promote normalcy.

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**Report Question 3(b):** Report how you successfully developed procedures for goals and action steps related to the ages and developmental activities for the children at the agency and please provide a few examples:

We encourage youth to provide input and perspective on their treatment and target skills. Youth and families drive decision-making and identify what is needed for the family to be successful. We hold frequent meetings to consistently discuss progress and changes that need to be implemented. For our Crisis Stabilization program, Family Team Meetings are held weekly to solicit feedback from parents and youth so that the case plan includes their input. Youth feedback is solicited to increase privileges that will motivate them to achieve their goals.

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**Report Question 3(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to use weekly Restorative Justice meetings as a way to make improvements. We will also look ot refine our newly instituted incentive program where youth can earn tickets to purchase items for positive behaviors.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard

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**Plan Question 4(a):** What is your agency's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- All staff are trained in the Reasonable and Prudent Parenting standards.
- OHB staff will provide supervision and guidance in regard to appropriate activities.
  - OHB encourages input from parents/guardians and referring agencies for when determining activities in which a youth can engage. While input from parents/guardians is encouraged, OHB staff are still empowered to make decisions regarding participation in other activities.

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**Report Question 4(b):** Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities and please provide a few examples:

Staff are trained on policies and procedures as well as Reasonable Prudent Parenting Standards. Staff receive onboarding training as well as refreshers on policies and procedures, and program rules related to RPPS. Staff have the opportunity to provide feedback to the leadership team at 30, 60, and 90s following hire. As managers, we meet regularly through supervision and staff meetings. We also provide 24 hour on call to direct-care staff in the event that they need questions answered.

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**Report Question 4(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency's plan going forward?

OHB has returned to a centralized trainer for all onboarding training in order to assure training is standardized, effective, and meaningful. We have instituted OHB University to streamline training for all staff members based on the needs and requirements for each position.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access

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**Plan Question 5(a):** What is your agency's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?

- OHB continually collaborates with community partners to identify practical and accessible activities for the youth we serve. We will annually review our "menu" of activities and experiences to assess for areas of improvement.

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**Report Question 5(b):** Report how you successfully created a list of activities for onsite and the community and provide a few examples of these activities:

We have a recreation center on site that youth have the ability to utilize daily. Our programs have an operating budget to plan for group events such as movie nights, bowling, or eating out. Each youth has the ability to earn money through youth employment and incentives and can earn the privilege to purchase their own items and/or pay their way for their own events.

We partner and collaborate with other agencies that assist us in providing different experiences that our youth may not have ever experienced. We work with community donors and partners to get youth into the community and exposed to different activities. Youth have access to an indoor swimming pool at least once a week. Youth have the opportunity participate in a community track team. Youth participate in career exploration activities. Youth plan activities such as bridge building competition, a bake sale fundraiser Souper Bowl, cooking classes.

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**Report Question 5(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

OHB will continue to explore and create new partnerships with community providers.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers

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**Plan Question 6(a):** What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?

- OHB utilizes an individualized treatment planning process for all youth being served. Accommodations are made to support those with disabilities and special needs on an individualized basis with regards to participation in developmentally appropriate activities.

---

**Report Question 6(b):** Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities and please provide a few examples:

We work closely with parents guardians and treatment providers to ensure all our youth needs are met. We work with schools and other institutions to allow youth to have the services they need if that is something we cannot provide.

---

**Report Question 6(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

None at this time.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system

---

**Plan Question 7(a):** What is your agency's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children at your agency are being met?

- A Normalcy Policy has been instituted at OHB.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences provided to the youth we serve.
- OHB provides services for the youth to talk to a representative about their youth records. The representative is from the organization, Juvenile Re-Entry Program.

---

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Our treatment plans are individualized based on youth needs and we do not take a one size fits all approach. We are constantly receiving input from the youth and families on how to improve and what their needs are. Our specialists work closely with the families to design programming around the youth including their goals, passes, education needs, activities, etc.

Our new ticket incentive program allows them to earn new incentives that can be motivating and rewarding.



---

**Report Question 7(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We will continue to solicit feedback from youth and families through surveys, Family Team Meetings, Youth Council, and Restorative Justice circles.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations

---

**Plan Question 8(a):** What is your agency's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?

- Staff at OHB receive training on various topics including Cultural Diversity, Trauma-Informed Care, and Policies & Procedures.
- OHB utilizes a Client Service Plan Procedure to help address services, supports, activities, and experiences on an individual basis with youth we serve.
- OHB offers services such as transportation to and from home passes.
- Therapy for substance abuse and gang involvement.
- Invite families to campus to visit.
- Weekly contact with the guardians.
- Weekly on campus therapy is provided.

---

**Report Question 8(b):** Report how you successfully have reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations and provide a few examples:

We strive to have our workforce reflect the population of the youth we serve. Our Youth Advocates are very diverse and represent a broad range of cultural backgrounds. All staff participate in DEI training annually. We collaborate with other agencies and ensure that our staff are extremely well trained. We serve the north Omaha community and are a pillar in the Benson area. Our program is set in an area that youth are familiar with and the families can easily access. Our services are set up to assist youth not just while they are with us but ongoing as well.

---

**Report Question 8(c):** What changes, if any, will you make to your agency plan going forward?

We have implemented a new DEI training quarterly for the year and enlisted an outside training from UNO to help educate our staff. We will continue to solicit feedback from youth and families through surveys, family team meetings, Youth Council, and Restorative Justice circles.

---

**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy

---

**Plan Question 9(a):** What is your agency's plan to put forth an effort in developing a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?

OHB has a Youth Council that meets Monthly. The Youth Council is a peer ran program where they exercicse leadership skills and provided a space to has a voice in OHB programs, services, activities, and experiences.

Each program home has nightly table meetings where youth can discuss day to day programming and express their wants and needs.

Restorative Justice groups meet once a week to resolve conflict and issues arise. The meetings are a place where they can have their voices heard.

---

**Report Question 9(b):** Report how your agency has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy and please provide a few examples:

We have implemented a Youth Council that meets monthly. Staff faciliate the meeting, but it is designed to be youth focused and driven. Staff will continue to evaluate processes so that the Youth Council can accomplish it's goals and be effective. All staff are invited to participate in events organized by the Youth Council. In it's time the Youth Council has addressed issues such as staff tolerance levels, youth bullying, and planned events such as a bake sale fundraiser, and a youth/staff billiards tournament.

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We would love to expand our membership to more OHB programs and have involvement from OHB alumni. We are working with an outside agency to include workshops about civic engagement and community advocacy in our Youth Council meetings.

Electronic Signature of Person Completing Form: Ross Wendel	Date of Electronic Signature: 4-15-2024
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Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Rite of Passage- Uta Halee Academy

Report Author:

Brittany Bowman

Author's Title:

Program Director

Phone Number:

402-905-1641

Email Address:

brittany.bowman@rop.com

Contract Date:

10/2023-6/30/2024

Plan Date:

10/2023-6/30/2024, Completed 8/12/24

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

Rite of Passage makes every effort to ensure student experiences in our programs are as normalized as possible. Uta Halee Academy (UHA) provides opportunities for the community to be involved in the facility activities. This is achieved through hosting an "open house" on an annual basis, encouraging and allowing students to participate in middle or high school sports, offering Graduation Ceremonies, community service opportunities, on campus visitation, and allowing students to go on passes in the community as the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) recommends. The young ladies in care have their own bedrooms that they can personalize within reasonable limits. Students attend school in an educational building wherein classrooms are developed as they would be in the community. Additionally, UHA has a partnership with the Girl Scouts of America, UNO Mentoring, and Music Therapy where our students can work with approved volunteers on a variety of programs and services for the students in care.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

Students have access to family/significant others on a regular basis; as approved by the MDT. Per policy, students receive a minimum of two phone calls a week; however, they typically receive more dependent upon program schedule and resource allocation. Students are able to write and receive as much written correspondence as they wish and Rite of Passage pays for the postage. Students are offered on campus visitation and community passes are granted as deemed appropriate by the MDT. Students have access to technology through the educational program. This access is monitored and students agree to utilize the technology responsibly and as intended. The facility offers an age-appropriate educational experience which is specific to a student's educational plan based on credits earned, aptitude, barriers to learning, strength-based strategies, and career aspirations. Students receive health care through community based resources as they would if they were in the home. The facility maintains strong community partnerships which foster exceptional communication and treatment planning to address students' needs. Students also have a structured day via a posted schedule so they are aware of the daily plan based on a variety of schedules based on need (i.e. week day schedule, weekend schedule, assembly schedule, etc.) Students have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities through organizations such as Music Therapy, Girl Scouts, and sports through the YMCA. Throughout the school year, students have been able to participate in guest speaker sessions with Firefighters, Beauticians, Military Recruiters, and other professionals to learn more about these services. Students also have participated in on-site activities as well such as Art, Music Therapy, Culinary, gardening, etc. Lastly, all students have the opportunity to become certified in CPR/First Aid during their time at UHA. As the census increases, more activities will be provided for the students.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

Upon admission into the program, each student has an individualized and prescriptive treatment plan developed for them that meets the criteria for CARF accreditation, the Rules and Regulations of the State of Nebraska, as well as the expectations of Rite of Passage. The individualized treatment plan is developed based off a battery of assessments and input from the student and treatment team. The treatment plan is completed and updated every 30 days to review progress towards each goal and revises as needed.

In addition, each student receives an Initial Diagnostic Interview with a licensed clinician (unless they have had an evaluation recently) which helps with the treatment planning.

Each month, the student, UHA Case manager, placing agency, and legal guardian all meet to review the treatment progress.

Within 30 days and every 90-days, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting occurs to discuss the treatment goals and progress as well. Revisions, updates, and changes to the plan are discussed during this time.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

Rite of Passage-Uta Halee Academy adheres to a 1:6 staffing ratio as outlined by our licensing agency, Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, ROP-UHA train all staff on the Interactive Supervision policy which includes the following examples:

- Being in the "mix"- meaning you can hear and see students and know exactly what is going on. If they are playing cards, you are playing cards with them or at least sitting next to them.
- Ensuring that you know where exits and entrances are located
- Ensuring that you are up to date on individualized concerns

All staff complete the required onboarding background process and initial training as required by Nebraska DHHS. In addition, staff receive at least 1 hour of ongoing training on a weekly basis.

In addition, within the intake process, UHA has legal guardians complete consents which allow the students to participate in developmentally appropriate activities both on site and off-site.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

Upon intake, each student is asked to list their "Strengths, Needs, Activities, and Preferences." This helps us identify which activities each student enjoys and wishes to participate in. In addition, staff and students are surveyed on a quarterly basis (at least) and are given the chance to provide input into the program activities. Leadership will review the surveys and make adjustments as needed.

In addition, Status Students are able to participate in weekly "Status Meetings," and are given an opportunity to provide input into activities on site.

During the 4-6pm timeframe, UHA's schedule lists "9th block" which is extracurricular activities. Typically, UHA has anywhere from 2-4 activities to choose from, students have the opportunity to pick their favorite one to participate in.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

UHA has admissions criteria and the facility does not generally admit students who fall outside of this criteria to ensure the best service provision possible. However, if students with specific circumstances are admitted, they are staffed with the MDT in advance of their admission so that the administration can develop a plan to ensure quality service delivery.

Examples:

- Students that have family members that do not speak English are provided with a translator during meetings, phone calls, etc. Material about the program has been revamped to be in Spanish as well.
- Students have the opportunity to practice whichever religion they believe in on a regular basis

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

Upon admission into the program, each student has an individualized and prescriptive treatment plan developed for them that meets the criteria for CARF accreditation, the Rules and Regulations of the State of Nebraska, as well as the expectations of Rite of Passage. Treatment plans are developed based on a battery of assessments, risk assessment, input from the MDT and the student herself as well. The Case Manager completes the treatment plan within 30 days of intake and updates it every 30 days. However, the Director of Student Services is responsible for ensuring that she reviews the plans to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met. For instance, ensuring that all students are signed up for the accurate treatment group. The following treatment groups are offered to ensure all individualized needs are met: Thinking for a Change, Aggression Replacement Training, University of Cincinnati Cognitive Behavioral Interventions for Substance Abuse, and Trauma group.

In addition, each student receives weekly individual therapy. This will be outlined in their treatment plan as well.



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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

All students that are referred to Uta Halee are reviewed and screened based on their collateral data and interview (when applicable). Rite of Passage prides itself on the implementation of culturally responsive practices. The facility evaluates the needs of the facility population on an annual basis through the development of a culturally responsive plan. The facility makes an effort to incorporate as many services as possible into programming based on student needs. These practices range from culturally sensitive hygiene products, to offering a variety of religious services, and other female specific programming components. The facility has also offered parental involvement and educational opportunities, such as family groups, based on need and the interest level within the population.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

In accordance with CARF requirements, UHA has implemented a "Status Club" which includes Interns and Contributors who have the opportunity to meet with the campus leadership to discuss needs, concerns and suggestions to improve programming. Additionally, all students in the program are surveyed quarterly to ensure they have an opportunity to render feedback related to all programming services. Based on that feedback, the facility makes adjustments as needed.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Women In Community Service Inc

Report Author:

Tauni Waddington

Author's Title:

Executive Director

Phone Number:

402-477-5256

Email Address:

wicshome@gmail.com

Contract Date:

Plan Date:

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

Planning Period (fill in the year):

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?**

Provide a unique and detailed plan for your agency to address overall barriers to normalcy in your child-care institution setting. This question looks at your agency's CURRENT plan. Identify what barriers to normalcy exist within your agency. Do not quote Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standards.

Follow the Normalcy plan that has been established.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency and provide examples of normalcy efforts for all children placed at your agency that fall outside of the norm of meeting basic educational and medical needs.

Education is the paramount component to our program. Residents are all required to attend school or work daily. Each resident has a daily program. They have access to have medical appointments. They have access to their chrome books for school work.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process for youth. Include examples of how your agency ensures that plans are individualized for the youth.

Each resident has an individualized plan and their goals are established with their team and reviewed monthly (at a minimum).

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities to ensure your agency addresses normalcy efforts when identifying developmentally appropriate activities.

Due to the nature of placement of our programming there is 24 hour supervision. We follow the prudent parent standard with each resident on an individual basis.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for gathering a list of normalcy activities that youth at your agency can participate in both onsite and in the community. Ensure that this list is available for easy access by the youth (posted in a common area, living area, etc.)

We are normally involved in many community activities. While many activities have been cancelled due to the ongoing issues with the pandemic, we are slowly resuming participation in activities available, and determined to be safe for the clients, and our community.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on how to provide normalcy activities for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Provide additional examples from your agency beyond Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

We meet the needs of our residents that have specialized needs. We are ADA compliant, but our facility, due to the nature of it's age, is not wheel chair accessible. We have not been asked to accomodate clients with wheelchair needs.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?**

Provide a detailed summary of how your agency CURRENTLY meets the individualized needs of youth at your agency.

Each resident has an individualized plan and goals. Goals are established and reviewed in monthly team meetings with all team members. Team members may include: Case Manager, Probation Officer or DHHS Case Worker, Guardian Ad Litem, CASA Worker, Therapist, Parent or Legal Guardian, Attorney.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?**

Definition of "disproportionate impact" (when statute or policy affects one race or ethnicity more than it affects another race or ethnicity). Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan on ensuring that youth of color are provided the opportunities for normalcy and ensure examples of how your agency addresses reducing youth of color's reentry into congregate care.

We have a very diverse staff and strive to maintain this diversity.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?**

Provide a detailed description of your agency's CURRENT plan for a youth board. Youth Boards should be independent from program expectations, clubs, or leadership programs. This should be youth-led and be able to address issues related to being in care (the voice of the youth).

Our Case Manager / Supervisor meets with our residents regularly for group discussions.

Reference: Nebraska Revised Statute 43-4706  
<https://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=43-4706>

Institution Name:

Women In Community Service

Report Author:

Tauni Waddington

Author's Title:

Executive Director

Phone Number:

402-477-5256

Email Address:

wicshome@gmail.com

Report Date:

4/25/24

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20\_\_ through September 30, 20\_\_

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30th and October 31st.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

**1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific PAST or CURRENT examples that you have successfully implemented to address overall barriers to normalcy at your agency. Provide detailed examples of ideas/tools you have used to address barriers to normalcy.

The program at WICS Residence is a structured program that maintain a focus of consistency and behavioral expectations. Every client is informed and familiarized with the structure and behavioral goals, plus we include at least 3 individual goals for every client. The expectations and consequences are clarified for each client to help them achieve success in their individual resident program.

**2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

We modify our programming when it is necessary.

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution, including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

**1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of PAST AND CURRENT normalcy efforts. Some examples could be access to telehealth/ technology, transportation plan for educational and extra-curricular activities, holiday activities for family members, etc.

Education is the paramount component to our program. Residents are all required to attend school or work daily. Each resident has a daily program. They have access to have medical appointments. They have access to their chrome books for school work.

Each resident has an individualized plan.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

We will address any changes necessary as the need arises.



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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

**1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of procedures for specific youth that the agency has served and include PAST and CURRENT examples.

Each residents goals are established and reviewed monthly in team meetings, and more frequently in staff meetings. Clients are expected to follow and are scored daily to follow at least 20 uniform behavioral goals, and up to 4 personal goals which are assigned to each client weekly, based on issues they may personally be struggling with. Each client knows their personal goals, and it helps each individual become accountable.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes will be made in the program as the need arises.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

**1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how you have implemented the plan and ensure that examples are in-line with normalcy efforts that enhance youth well-being and promote typical childhood experiences.

We follow Prudent Parenting standards in each individualized client planning. We work with staff and other members of the team to determine individual needs and goals as needed with each client.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes will be made in the program as the need arises.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

**1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:**

Provide examples of how your agency has successfully utilized a list of activities for youth and provide a few examples of specific youth's opportunities within your agency. Include PAST and/or CURRENT examples.

We are involved in community activities as they arise such as Lied Center events, Jazz in June, Girl Scouts come in for weekly meetings, Stransky Park Concerts, weekly recreational activities in the community, local and national sporting events, Community art activities, tours of all colleges and universities in this area, both zoos, speakers, State games, community volunteering and many others.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes will be made as the needs arise.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

**1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or PRESENT, examples of how your agency has successfully implemented accommodations and support services for youth with disabilities and/or special needs. Examples should include examples outside of regulated accommodations such as wheel-chair access bathrooms etc.

We work on an individualized basis and accommodate specialized needs on accordingly. This includes working with school administration for any individual behavioral / educational required by the client or working with individual therapists for specific coping skills that may be successfully implemented within the group living environment.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes will be made when they arise in the program.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

**1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific examples of how your agency has met the individualized needs of children in the PAST or CURRENTLY.

We review and implement during monthly team meetings their individualized goals. i.e.: some clients attend weekly counseling sessions, some more often, or different sessions such as IOP, OP or MRT sessions. It is always based on individual needs of each client.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

Changes will be made when they arise in the program.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

**1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST, or PRESENT, examples of how your agency's plan has successfully implemented normalcy activities for youth of color that reduces the race disproportionality of the system.

Our clientele are multi-national, and multi-cultural in nature. We work diligently teaching respect for, and learning about the different cultures in Social Groups, and have even invited client families to come in and prepare cultural dishes for all to share and experience. We engage our residents in diversity activities in the community regularly.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

We make changes as the needs arise to our program.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

**1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:**

Provide specific, PAST or CURRENT, examples of how your agency has successfully made efforts to develop a youth board. If your agency does not have a youth board, provide detailed examples of steps your agency has made to implement one.

Our staff is trained in "reasonable and prudent parenting" aspects, and this reflects in modeling appropriate treatment/behavior to our clients. With the Therapy Liaison aspect, the girls gain skills that help modeling those same skills within their peer group itself. The Therapy Liaison attends regular staff meetings, and reports client/peer issues, so that we can better address circumstances that improve staff development in working with an ever-changing population.

**2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?**

Please do not skip this question. If barriers were identified, please address for this question what changes your agency will make to the agency plan moving forward. If there are no barriers or changes identified, please explain why there are no changes to the plan needed.

We make changes as the needs arise to our program.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Tauni Waddington

Designee's Title: Executive Director

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

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# Normalcy Plan

**Institution Name:** Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Hastings

**Report Author:** Camella Jacobe

**Author's Title:** Facility Administrator

**Phone Number:** (402) 460-3164

**Email Address:** Camella.Jacobe@nebraska.gov

**Contract Date:** 11/3/2023

**Plan Date:** 8/25/2023

**Planning Period (fill in the year):**

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?

Hastings' creates opportunities that would allow youth to act and react in scenarios that they would encounter in the community and in family style settings. Some examples would include family style dining, opportunities for various religious services, evidence-based groups, a fully accredited school program, staff led activities, recreation activities, life skills groups, and leisure activities. Hastings would offer individualized and gender specific programming while also utilizing a unit-based approach where our youth learn to work with and in a group setting, mimicking a family style culture. Hastings' developed a Community Advisory Board, with members from the Hastings and surrounding communities that could bridge the relationship between the community and the facility to offer opportunities for youth to be involved in community service projects, community volunteer projects, and community activities/events. Family engagement is critical to our youth's continued progress. To achieve more family engagement, the facility offers phone calls, on campus visits, virtual visits, off campus visits, reentry placement furloughs. Hastings also offers opportunities for families to be involved in graduation ceremonies and holiday meals. Youth are also able to write letters to anyone that is not restricted on the mailing list. Hastings will continue to look at other option available to increase plans of normalcy in the facility.

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and

technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?

Hastings' has established a fluid daily schedule for youth to follow, including interests and ideas from the youth. The daily schedule will include, but is not limited to daily hygiene, daily chores including laundry, cleaning, school (where they will have access to educational materials and a media center), recreation sports/activities, arts/crafts, gender specific and behavioral management groups, and leisure time. Hastings will have daily access to health care for the youth, with full-time medical staff who are available 24 hours, 7-days a week.

Relationships with family will be fostered through virtual visits, online visits, in-person visits, furloughs, and through telephone calls and mail. Youth are given 60-minutes per week to make phone calls to people who are of significance in their lives. Vouchers for fuel are offered to families who are in need. Vouchers are also available for a hotel room for families who are 3-hours or more from the facility. Visits can be offered at other times than regular visiting hours when approved through Administration. Hastings plans to look at the possibility of personal tablets for youth to ensure regular contact with family and people of significance in their lives.

**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?

Case Managers develop the youth's Plan of Care, which includes input from the youth, the youth's treatment team, the youth's family, and their probation officer. The Plan of Care will focus on areas of risk and need as identified by the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory. Youth will also undergo an initial assessment upon arrival that aides in the development of the Plan of Care. Recreational activities, treatment groups, individual therapy, and family therapy, and substance abuse treatment, if needed, will be part of the youth's Plan of Care. The youth's Case Manager provides monthly updates to the youth's outside treatment team through Progress Letters. The Progress letters are shared with the youth's judge, attorney, probation officer, and parent/guardian. Having positive pro-social activities to participate in is often a need for many youths. Hastings offers pro-social skills through life skills groups, daily positive interactions with staff, and through various recreation and leisure activities that are age appropriate. Having positive activities that youth enjoy is a factor that reduces recidivism.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?

All on and off campus activities will be supervised by YRTC staff members. The facilities are required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to maintain a one staff to eight youth ratios during wake hours, however our goal is to work within a one staff to six youth ratios, to work in smaller groups and

offer more staff engagement with our youth. All on and off campus activities are approved by Administration. Hastings has a Nebraska Youth Engagement Services approach to program, which encourages and promotes staff engagement in the youth's daily schedule, groups, and activities. Recreation has a youth interest form that youth fill out for ideas of leisure activities and physical activities they would enjoy for their specific age groups.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?

Recreation staff provide at a minimum, one hour of large muscle activity and one hour of a leisure activity daily. Recreation activities will include however are not limited to; sports programs, art/craft projects, and volunteer activities. Staff led activities are also provided, which allow for more staff engagement with youth. Youth can earn incentives for on and off campus activities and privileges. The Hastings recreation staff, and activity specialist will provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities for youth housed at the facility which will include youth input on activities of interest. Youth will be given the opportunity to participate in sports including flag football, ultimate football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, kickball, wiffle ball, dodge ball, four squares, nine square, ultimate Frisbee, weight room circuits, indoor and outdoor free play, and off campus swimming. Recreation staff, the activity specialist, the unit managers, and religious coordinator will also offer a variety of leisure activities that include but are not limited to manicures, pedicures, word puzzles, puzzles, crocheting, drawing, scrapbooking, creating vision board, creating future life stories, scratch art, diamond art, painting, clay sculpting, water play, walks, and baking. Hastings also provides off campus volunteer community service opportunities, that include however are not limited to setting up, serving, and cleaning up for community activities and events, landscaping for businesses, and handing out informational flyers to the community.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?

Any accommodations for youth to participate in activities would be made on a case-by-case basis. Hastings is also required to provide accommodations for disabled youth by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The YRTC are required to maintain ACA accreditation. All areas of campus are ADA accessible and any youth with a disability would have access to areas that would allow them to participate in activities and services. Hastings West High School accommodates all Individual Education Plans that were established for youth upon admission. Hastings has accommodated youth who are unable to read and write, by offering staff support and special educations support.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?

Hastings has individualized Plans of Care, which will be made in conjunction with the youth's facility treatment team, the youth's family or guardian, and any other community support persons that the youth may wish to have involved. The youth's probation officer and reentry probation officer will be involved in this process and will provide input as to the youth's risks and needs as identified by Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Each area of risk/need will be addressed in the Plan of Care with individualized goals and objectives. The youth's Case Manager will update the youth's outside treatment team, including but not limited to their judge, attorney, probation office, and parent/guardian with a Progress Letter monthly. An Initial Assessment will also be completed by mental health staff to identify any mental health or substance abuse treatment needs. Also, as things change with a youth, all the above goals and objectives can change to make sure we are providing each youth with what would benefit them most.

Youth from each unit/group apply for, are selected, and participate in a monthly youth council, where youth can advocate for programming and needs, they feel would benefit them.

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**Requirement 8: Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.**

What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?

There is no screening process to determine which youth will be admitted to the program. Hastings accepts every youth that is committed and works with each youth and family on their individualized needs. Hastings plan is to try to understand our youth's situations, what brought them to the facility, and how to best serve them so they can be reunited with their families as much as possible. If reunification is not possible with families, Hastings will work closely with probation to determine placement where the youth will have the most success in.

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**Requirement 9: Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.**

What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?

Hastings meets at least quarterly with a Community Advisory Board to discuss the programming and interests of the youth we serve. The Community Advisory Board offers suggestions and opportunities for our youth to be involved in the Community of Hastings through volunteer work, community service, and activities/events. The Community Advisory Board members meet with the youth bi-annually to discuss how the youth view their programming and needs are being met.

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# Normalcy Report

Institution Name: YRTC Hastings  
Report Author: Camella Jacobe  
Author's Title: Facility Administrator  
Phone Number: (402) 462-1971  
Email Address: [camella.jacobe@nebraska.gov](mailto:camella.jacobe@nebraska.gov)  
Report Date: 4/15/2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20xx through September 30, 20xx

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC Hastings creates opportunities that would allow youth to act and react in scenarios that they would encounter in the community and in family-style settings. Some examples would include family-style dining, opportunities for various religious services, evidence-based groups, a fully accredited school program, staff-led activities, recreation activities, life skills groups, and leisure activities. YRTC Hastings would offer individualized and gender-specific programming while also utilizing a unit-based approach where our youth learn to work with and in a group setting, mimicking a family-style culture. Hastings developed a Community Advisory Board, with members from the Hastings and surrounding communities that could bridge the relationship between the community and the facility to offer opportunities for youth to be involved in community service projects, community volunteer projects, and community activities/events. Family engagement is critical to our youth's continued progress. To achieve more family engagement, the facility offers phone calls, on-campus visits, virtual visits, off-campus visits, and reentry placement furloughs. YRTC Hastings also offers opportunities for families to be involved in graduation ceremonies and holiday meals. The facility also offers transportation and fuel vouchers for families who would like to visit their youth, however, financially are unable to do so. Youth are also able to write letters to anyone who is not restricted on their mailing list. YRTC Hastings will continue to look at other options available to increase plans of normalcy in the facility.

2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?

YRTC Hastings Leadership is part of a Community Collaborative network of individuals/agencies in the Hastings Community that meets monthly. This community of individuals is focused on bridging the gap between agencies and services offered. The youth at YRTC will benefit

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC Hastings has established a fluid daily schedule for youth to follow, including interests and ideas from the youth. The daily schedule will include, but is not limited to daily hygiene, daily chores including laundry, cleaning, school (where they will have access to educational materials and a media center), recreation sports/activities, arts/crafts, gender-specific and behavioral management groups, and leisure time. YRTC Hastings will have daily access to health care for the youth, with full-time medical staff who are available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Relationships with the family will be fostered through virtual visits, online visits, in-person visits, furloughs, and through telephone calls and mail. Youth are given 60 minutes per week to make phone calls to people who are of significance in their lives. Vouchers for fuel are offered to families who are in need. Vouchers are also available for a hotel room for families who are 3 hours or more from the facility. Visits can be offered at other times than regular visiting hours when approved by Administration.

YRTC Hastings plans to look at the possibility of personal tablets for youth to ensure regular contact with family and people of significance in their lives.

2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to provide a fluid schedule for youth based off of interests and needs. Youth will continue to be afforded to opportunity to have access to technology through school and other activities. Health care will continue to be provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The facility continues to strive to find ways to engage family more in their youth's program while committed. YRTC Hastings would like to find ways to get families more involved with their youth during our programming. Getting family input into this will be part of our plan for the coming year.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:



Case Managers develop the youth's Plan of Care, which includes input from the youth, the youth's treatment team, the youth's family, and their probation officer. The Plan of Care will focus on areas of risk and need as identified by the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory. Youth will also undergo an initial assessment upon arrival that aids in the development of the Plan of Care. Recreational activities, treatment groups, individual therapy, family therapy, and substance abuse treatment, if needed, will be part of the youth's Plan of Care. The youth's Case Manager provides monthly updates to the youth's outside treatment team through Progress Letters. The Progress letters are shared with the youth's judge, attorney, probation officer, and parent/guardian. Having positive pro-social activities to participate in is often a need for many youths. Hastings offers pro-social skills through life skills groups, daily positive interactions with staff, and various recreation and leisure activities that are age-appropriate. Having positive activities that youth enjoy is a factor that reduces recidivism.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to focus on the individual needs of each youth in our program. YRTC Hastings understands the importance of family involvement, especially if family is the permanency plan for the youth, so YRTC would like to find ways to increase family involvement while their youth is at YRTC Hastings.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

### 1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

All on and off-campus activities will be supervised by YRTC staff members. The facilities are required by the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to maintain a 1:8 staff-to-youth ratio during wake hours, however, our goal is to work within 1:6 staff-to-youth ratios, to work in smaller groups and offer more staff engagement with our youth. All on and off-campus activities are approved by Administration. YRTC Hastings has a Nebraska Youth Engagement Services approach to the program, which encourages and promotes staff engagement in the youth's daily schedule, groups, and activities. Recreation has a youth interest form that youth fill out for ideas of leisure activities and physical activities they would enjoy for their specific age groups.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to evaluate hiring needs to ensure we are providing beneficial and meaningful programming for all of our youth's needs and pro-social activities.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

### 1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:

Recreation staff provide at a minimum, one hour of large muscle activity and one hour of a leisure activity daily. Recreation activities will include however are not limited to; sports programs, art/craft

projects, and volunteer activities. Staff-led activities are also provided, which allow for more staff engagement with youth. Youth can earn incentives for on and off-campus activities and privileges. The Hastings recreation staff and activity specialist will provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities for youth housed at the facility which will include youth input on activities of interest. Youth will be allowed to participate in sports including flag football, ultimate football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, kickball, whiffle ball, dodge ball, four squares, nine square, ultimate Frisbee, weight room circuits, indoor and outdoor free play, and off-campus swimming. Recreation staff, the activity specialist, the unit managers, and the Religious Coordinator will also offer a variety of leisure activities that include but are not limited to manicures, pedicures, word puzzles, puzzles, crocheting, drawing, scrapbooking, creating vision boards, creating future life stories, scratch art, diamond art, painting, clay sculpting, water play, walks, and baking. YRTC Hastings also provides off-campus volunteer community service opportunities, that include but are not limited to setting up, serving, and cleaning up for community activities and events, landscaping for businesses, and handing out informational flyers to the community.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

We will provide activities that both interest the youth and activities that might be new to them as they might discover other activities they like. YRTC will continue to provide the recreation assessment which indicates youth's interest in activities.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

### 1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

Any accommodations for youth to participate in activities would be made on a case-by-case basis. Hastings is also required to provide accommodations for disabled youth by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The YRTCs are required to maintain ACA accreditation. All areas of campus are ADA accessible and any youth with a disability would have access to areas that would allow them to participate in activities and services. Hastings West High School accommodates all Individual Education Plans that were established for youth upon admission. Hastings has accommodated youth who are unable to read and write, by offering staff support and special educations support.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to evaluate our accommodation needs and will work with any youth committed to our facility to ensure their programming and physical needs are met.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

### What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?

YRTC Hastings has individualized Plans of Care, which will be made in conjunction with the youth's facility treatment team, the youth's family or guardian, and any other community support persons that



the youth may wish to have involved. The youth's probation officer and reentry probation officer will be involved in this process and will provide input as to the youth's risks and needs as identified by Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Each area of risk/need will be addressed in the Plan of Care with individualized goals and objectives. The youth's Case Manager will update the youth's outside treatment team, including but not limited to their judge, attorney, probation office, and parent/guardian with a Progress Letter monthly. An Initial Assessment will also be completed by mental health staff to identify any mental health or substance abuse treatment needs. Also, as things change with a youth, all the above goals and objectives can change to make sure we are providing each youth with what would benefit them most.

Youth from each unit/group apply for, are selected, and participate in a monthly Youth Council, where youth can advocate for programming and needs, they feel would benefit them.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to assess our youth upon commitment for various needs, with input from the youth's outside support team. YRTC Hastings will continue with the Youth Council each month to ensure the youth have a way of advocating for their needs/wants.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

### 1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:

There is no screening process to determine which youth will be admitted to the program. Hastings accepts every youth that is committed and works with each youth and family on their individualized needs. YRTC Hastings plan is to try to understand our youth's situations, what brought them to the facility, and how to best serve them so they can be reunited with their families as much as possible. If reunification is not possible with families, YRTC Hastings will work closely with probation to determine placement where the youth will have the most success in.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hastings will continue to work with all youth committed, with the youth's outside support team, and will work to ensure the youth is a part of the plan for successful reentry into the community.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

### 1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC Hastings meets at least quarterly with a Community Advisory Board to discuss the programming and interests of the youth we serve. The Community Advisory Board offers suggestions and opportunities for our youth to be involved in the Community of Hastings through volunteer work, community service, and activities/events. The Community Advisory Board members

meet with the youth bi-annually to discuss how the youth view their programming and if they feel their needs are being met.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC Hasting will continue to meet quarterly with the Community Advisory Board members to get feedback and keep an open communication regarding community events/activities/services available for our youth.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Camella Jacobe

Designee's Title: Facility Administrator

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

All youth receive a Youth Handbook during orientation into the program. The Youth Handbook has a section that identifies how youth can bring their activity ideas to a Youth Council member. During orientation this process is also discussed verbally with the youth. The Youth Council member, as a representative for their group can bring one activity idea to the monthly Youth Council meeting. The Youth Council meeting minutes are distributed to the Youth Council members to share with their group.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

The notification of the process to get ideas into the Youth Council is posted on the Youth Information boards in each Living Unit and on the information board by the Front Office.

# Normalcy Plan

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**Institution Name:** Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Kearney

**Report Author:** Cindy Krolikowski

**Author's Title:** Facility Administrator

**Phone Number:** (308) 338-2004 X204

**Email Address:** [Cindy.Krolikowski@nebraska.gov](mailto:Cindy.Krolikowski@nebraska.gov)

**Contract Date:** 11/3/2023

**Plan Date:** 8/21/2023

**Planning Period (fill in the year):**

October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

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**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?

YRTC-Kearney serves youth through individualized plans of care and evidence-based programming, which includes family treatment and enhancement of personal life skills. Specialized treatment is also available for substance abuse and youth who have sexually harmed. Transition back to the community will require collaboration between the YRTC treatment team, Probation's re-entry unit, community providers and schools to ensure a smooth transition.

We incorporate opportunities to implementing change and keep the youth's adolescence in mind. This means we try to create opportunities that would allow youth to act and react in scenarios they may encounter in the community. Some examples include religious services, group/team events, school settings, and leisure activities and community service projects

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?

YRTC-Kearney strives to offer recreational and personal growth activities both on campus and off. These opportunities include access to art/music materials and recreation opportunities. From an academic standpoint, YRTC-Kearney provides youth with traditional education and technological skills through an accredited high school.

Relationships with family are fostered through both in person and virtual visits. Kearney has increased the number of visits (via virtual means) and phone calls a youth can have with their families. Kearney follows a daily schedule which includes specific times for bed, waking hours, school, and other activities. Programming meetings occur at the conclusion of the school day. Kearney offers evidence-based cognitive-behavioral programming (MRT and ART).

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?

Youth undergo an initial assessment upon arrival that aides in the development of the treatment plans. Treatment plans focus on areas of risk and need as identified by the Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Case managers at YRTC-Kearney are involved in developing a plan of care that involves input from the youth, the youth's treatments team, the youth's family, and their probation officer.

Recreational activities are often a part of the youth's plan of care as a pro-social activity to participate in. At YRTC-Kearney, we view these types of positive activities as a factor that helps in reducing recidivism.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?

All on and off campus activities are supervised by YRTC staff members. YRTC-Kearney is required by the Prison Elimination Act (PREA) to maintain a one staff to eight youth ratios during waking hours. All activities must be approved by the Facility Administrator or their designee

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?

At YRTC-Kearney, leisure activities are provided by the Recreation Department. Recreation staff include activities based in sports and in the education of various sports. Kearney's Recreation staff provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities to all our youth, which include softball, flag football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and ultimate frisbee. In addition to these sports, Kearney's facility has a soccer field, an obstacle course, indoor pool, and weight room. In Kearney, we also provide craft projects and volunteer activities that are designed and facilitated by Kearney staff. Youth

are orientated to opportunities for leisure activities through the youth manual, communication from direct care staff, and incentives for on and off campus activities (through the youth's case manager).

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?

Any accommodations for youth would be made on a case-by-case basis. YRTC-Kearney is required to provide accommodations for disabilities per standards of the American Correctional Association (ACA). Kearney has maintained its accreditation for the last 10 years.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?

Individualized plans of care are made in conjunction with the youth's treatment team in Kearney, the youth's family/guardian, and any other community support that the youth may wish to have involved. The youth's probation officer is also highly involved in this process and provides input as to the youth's risks and needs as identified by their YLS/CMI. Each area of risk/needs is addressed in the case plan with individualized goals and objectives. An Initial Assessment is also completed by mental health staff to identify any mental health or substance abuse treatment needs.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?

YRTC-Kearney has no say in which youth are adjudicated to the facility, as they are committed by the courts. We do not screen youth in any way, we accept all youth that are committed. Kearney encourages family contact as much as possible through phone calls and visitation. Since COVID-19, we have added virtual visits as an additional means to achieve family engagement. Family therapy services are also available. For example, family involvement is an important component of the Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA), which is a SAMHSA recognized best practice for youth with substance abuse issues. Family therapy needs are determined by a youth's mental health counselor and treatment team.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?

At the YRTC-Kearney, youth may make requests and suggestions through their group meetings, Case Managers, Unit Managers, or letters to the Facility Administrator or Program Manager. Kearney

also has a grievance process that is handled directly by a Compliance team which does not report to the Facility Administrator.

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# Normalcy Report

Institution Name: Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center

Report Author: Cindy Krolikowski

Author's Title: Facility Administrator

Phone Number: 308-865-5313

Email Address: [Cindy.Krolikowski@nebraska.gov](mailto:Cindy.Krolikowski@nebraska.gov)

Report Date: 4-8-2024

Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20xx through September 30, 20xx

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC-Kearney serves youth through individualized plans of care and evidence-based programming, which includes family treatment and enhancement of personal life skills. Specialized treatment is also available for substance abuse and youth who have sexually harmed. Transition back to the community will require collaboration between the YRTC treatment team, Probation's re-entry unit, community providers, and schools to ensure a smooth transition.

We incorporate opportunities to implement change and keep the youth's adolescence in mind. This means we try to create opportunities that would allow youth to act and react in scenarios they may encounter in the community. Some examples include religious services, group/team events, school settings, leisure activities, and community service projects.

2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?

Always looking for more opportunities in the community or how we can bring normalcy to our youth on campus.

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC-Kearney strives to offer recreational and personal growth activities both on campus and off. These opportunities include access to art/music materials and recreation opportunities. From an academic standpoint, YRTC-Kearney provides youth with traditional education and technological skills through an accredited high school.

Relationships with family are fostered through both in-person and virtual visits along with off-campus visits. Kearney has increased the number of visits (via virtual means) and phone calls youth can have with their families. Kearney follows a daily schedule that includes specific times for bed, waking hours, school, and other activities. Programming meetings occur at the conclusion of the school day. Kearney offers evidence-based cognitive-behavioral programming (MRT and ART).

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

We work with the community to provide more opportunities for our youth and are looking into our programming for the youth.

**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:

Youth undergo an initial assessment upon arrival that aids in the development of the treatment plans. Treatment plans focus on areas of risk and need as identified by the Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Case managers at YRTC-Kearney are involved in developing a plan of care that involves input from the youth, the youth's treatment team, the youth's family, and their probation officer.

Recreational activities are often a part of the youth's plan of care as a pro-social activity to participate in. At YRTC-Kearney, we view these types of positive activities as a factor that helps in reducing recidivism.

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate or better our services.



**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

All on and off-campus activities are supervised by YRTC staff members. YRTC-Kearney is required by the Prison Elimination Act (PREA) to maintain a 1:8 staff-to-youth ratio during waking hours. All activities must be approved by the Facility Administrator or their designee.

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate of better our services.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:

At YRTC-Kearney, leisure activities are provided by the Recreation Department. Recreation staff include sports-based activities and the education of various sports. Kearney's Recreation staff provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities to all our youth, which include softball, flag football, volleyball, basketball, soccer, and ultimate frisbee. In addition to these sports, Kearney's facility has a soccer field, an obstacle course, an indoor pool, and a weight room. In Kearney, we also provide craft projects and volunteer activities that are designed and facilitated by Kearney staff. Youth are orientated to opportunities for leisure activities through the youth manual, communication from direct care staff, and incentives for on and off-campus activities (through the youth's case manager).

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate of better our services.

**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

Any accommodations for youth would be made on a case-by-case basis. YRTC-Kearney is required to provide accommodations for disabilities per the standards of the American Correctional Association (ACA). Kearney has maintained its accreditation yearly.

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Evaluating and accessing if any changes upgrades are needed.

**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

Individualized plans of care are made in conjunction with the youth's treatment team in Kearney, the youth's family/guardian, and any other community support that the youth may wish to have involved. The youth's probation officer is also highly involved in this process and provides input as to the youth's risks and needs as identified by their YLS/CMI. Each area of risk/need is addressed in the case plan with individualized goals and objectives. An Initial Assessment is also completed by mental health staff to identify any mental health or substance abuse treatment needs.

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate of better our services.

**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC-Kearney has no say in which youth are adjudicated to the facility, as they are committed by the courts. We do not screen youth in any way, we accept all youth that are committed. Kearney encourages family contact as much as possible through phone calls and visitation. Since COVID-19, we have added virtual visits as an additional means to achieve family engagement. Family therapy services are also available. For example, family involvement is an important component of the Adolescent Community Reinforcement Approach (ACRA), which is a SAMHSA-recognized best practice for youth with substance abuse issues. Family therapy needs are determined by a youth's mental health counselor and treatment team.

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2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate of better our services.

**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:

AT the YRTC-Kearney, youth may make requests and suggestions through their group meetings, Case Managers, Unit Managers, or letters to the Facility Administrator or Program Manager. Kearney also has a grievance process that is handled directly by a Compliance team which does not report to the Facility Administrator.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Always looking at an evaluating the services that we are providing for the youth and if we can in cooperate of better our services.

Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Cindy Krolikowski

Designee's Title: Facility Administrator

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

We have youth who are involved in the Student Council where they can offer suggestions about changes or different things they would like at the facility. They also can talk with their treatment teams, Case Manager, and Unit Manager. Youth can also request to speak with the Facility Administrator to discuss ideas, concerns, or issues.

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A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

We have it in the youth manual that youth can request to talk with any staff member on campus to discuss ideas, concerns, and issues.

# Normalcy Plan

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**Institution Name:** Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Lincoln

**Report Author:** Sarah Brownell

**Author's Title:** Facility Administrator

**Phone Number:** (402) 471-1030

**Email Address:** Sarah.Brownell@nebraska.gov

**Contract Date:** 11/3/2023

**Plan Date:** 8/31/2023

**Planning Period (fill in the year):**

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Plan is submitted once and thereafter, anytime there are subsequent changes.)

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**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

What is your institution's plan to address barriers to normalcy?

Community involvement with volunteers (religious, mentors, education)

Holiday/special events involving all youth, staff, and families

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**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

What is your institution's plan for making normalcy efforts for all children placed at your institution to address this requirement?

Daily/weekly access to calls, visits, and therapy with families (in-person and video)

Year-round education programming includes Chromebooks and virtual learning opportunities.

Access to current electronics (gaming, laptops, music devices)

Daily/weekly access to nursing and psychiatrist.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally-appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

What is your institution's procedure for developing goals and action steps in the case plan and case planning process to address this requirement?

All case plans, programmatic goals, and education delivery is reflective of the youth's individual abilities, strengths, aptitude, and areas in need of improvement.

These are derived from collateral information (guardians, relatives, professionals, previous placement, current interactions, and clinical recommendations)

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

What is your institution's plan for handling policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities?

Maintaining high ratio of staff to youth for individualized care.

Consistent clinical, medical, education and direct care staff collaboration.

Curriculum development based on current populations and evidence based, best practices.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

What is your institution's plan for gathering a list of activities both onsite and in the community?

Due to the high acuity youth at YRTC-Lincoln, community-based activities are limited.

Increased furloughs prior to discharge

Activities onsite include, but not limited to: Education, visits with family, therapy, family therapy, therapy groups, life skills activities, special events/celebrations.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

What accommodations and support services have been identified in your plan so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities?

YRTC-Lincoln has not served a youth with disabilities or special needs beyond a below average IQ.

Plan to utilize appropriate housing status (ADA room) and work with medical and clinical on appropriate interventions.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

What is your institution's plan to ensure that the individualized needs of all children are being met?

All treatment planning at YRTC-Lincoln is individualized and data driven. Goals and interventions are developed by the clinical team, external team, guardians, and individual youth. YRTC-Lincoln is also required to provide accommodations for disabled youth by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The YRTC facilities are required to maintain ACA accreditation.

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**Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

What is your institution's plan to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations?

YRTC does not have control over the commitments to the state. YRTC-Lincoln accepts all youth who are adjudicated by the courts. YRTC-Lincoln will work with individual families to meet the needs for services, visits, transition home, etc.

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**Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

What is your institution's plan to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard and promoting/supporting normalcy?

YRTC-Lincoln serves a small census of youth for an average of 125 days for length of stay. Youth are encouraged to utilize the grievance system or two-way requests for program improvement, and their attorneys, and the hotline (if applicable) to report misconduct.

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# Normalcy Report

**Institution Name:** Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center, Lincoln

**Report Author:** Sarah Brownell

**Author's Title:** Facility Administrator

**Phone Number:** (402) 471-1030

**Email Address:** Sarah.Brownell@nebraska.gov

**Report Date:** 4/25/2024

**Reporting Period (choose one and fill in the year):**

☒ October 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024

☐ April 1, 20xx through September 30, 20xx

All questions must be answered completely. Submit electronically to [dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov](mailto:dhhs.normalcy@nebraska.gov).  
(The Normalcy Report is submitted twice a year, by April 30<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup>)

**Requirement 1:** Efforts to address barriers to normalcy that are inherent in a child-care institution setting.

1. Report how you successfully addressed barriers to normalcy at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

Community involvement with volunteers (religious, mentors, education)

Special holiday events for youth, staff, and families

Community outings to parks, meals, school, home/discharge location, etc.

Individual celebrations (graduations, birthdays, achievements, discharge eligibility)

2. In order to address the barriers identified in question one, what modifications do you anticipate making to your normalcy plan for the next state fiscal year?

We do not have barriers to implementing the examples listed above.

**Requirement 2:** Normalcy efforts for all children placed at the child-care institution including, but not limited to, relationships with family, age or developmentally appropriate access to technology and technological skills, education and school stability, access to health care and information, and access to a sustainable and durable routine.

1. Report how you successfully made normalcy efforts for all children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

Daily/weekly access to calls, visits, and therapy with families (in-person and video)  
Year-round education programs including Chromebooks, a variety of electronics, and virtual learning opportunities  
Access to current electronics (laptops, gaming systems, individual music devices)  
Daily/Weekly access to nurse and psychiatrist.

## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Changes will include remaining current with the time and developments in technology. All media, gaming, electronics, etc. are updated at least annually.  
Changes in education will stem from best practice requirements and the ongoing development of new educational approaches.

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**Requirement 3:** Procedures for developing goals and action steps in the child-care institution's case plan and case planning process related to participation in age or developmentally appropriate activities for each child placed at the child-care institution.

### 1. Report how you successfully developed procedures for meeting goals and taking steps in the case planning process related to participation in age and developmentally appropriate activities for children, and please provide a few examples:

All case plans, programmatic goals, and education delivery are reflective of the youth's individual abilities, strengths, aptitude, and areas in need of improvement.  
These are derived from collateral information (guardians, relatives, professionals, previous placement, current interactions, and clinical recommendations)

The youth also provide valuable feedback about their needs and wants at the facility. Most often, the youth have access to desired items for age-appropriate activities through the incentive program. If they want something specific, they have access to a variety of ways to request changes or new items.

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## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

No changes to the process, currently. The program and individual interventions and/or requests are handled case by case and evolve over time. The facility will continue to be open-minded about youth requests.

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**Requirement 4:** Policies on staffing, supervision, permission, and consent to age or developmentally appropriate activities consistent with the reasonable and prudent parent standard.

### 1. Report how you successfully implemented policies on staffing, supervision, and giving permission and consent for age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

We maintain a high ratio of staff to youth for individualized care.  
Consistent clinical, medical, education, and direct care staff collaboration.  
Curriculum development is based on current populations and evidence-based, best practices

## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Changes would include ongoing development of new interventions based on current population needs. These discussions occur daily, weekly, and monthly depending on the type of change.

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Changes to current practices, policy, supervision, and staffing are based on following standards and statutes, as well as considering the needs of the current population and how changes will impact the youth individually and as a group.

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**Requirement 5:** A list of activities that the child-care institution provides onsite and a list of activities in the community regarding which the child-care institution will make children aware, promote, and support access.

1. Report how you successfully created a list of activities, both onsite and in the community, and please provide a few examples of these activities:

Due to the high acuity youth at YRTC-Lincoln, community-based activities are limited but can occur with a high level of preparation and supervision.

We continue to increase furloughs prior to discharge, to include community-based opportunities.

Activities onsite include, but are not limited to: Education, visits with family, therapy, family therapy, therapy groups, life skills activities, and special events/celebrations.

Activities offsite include, but are not limited to: Going out to eat, visiting home school, going to public parks, etc.

2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

We have a plan to increase opportunities in the community. We plan to expand offsite options for the youth, as well as increase the frequency of opportunities if a youth's behavior and mental health are stabilized and maintained.

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**Requirement 6:** Identified accommodations and support services so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities to the same extent as their peers.

1. Report how you successfully put accommodations and support services in place so that children with disabilities and special needs can participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC-Lincoln has not served any youth with disabilities or special needs beyond a below-average IQ or minor vision impairment requiring minimal intervention.

We plan to utilize appropriate housing status (ADA room) and work with the medical and clinical team on appropriate interventions, if applicable.

2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Changes to the current plan would occur based on medical and ADA needs with the support of the facility physician. Any accommodations needed for the youth other than medical would result in consultation with a professional in the corresponding specialty.

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**Requirement 7:** The individualized needs of all children involved in the system.

1. Report how you successfully met the individualized needs of the children at your institution, and please provide a few examples:

All treatment planning at YRTC-Lincoln is individualized and data-driven. Goals and interventions are developed by the clinical team, external team, guardians, and individual youth. YRTC-Lincoln is also required to provide accommodations for disabled youth by the American Correctional Association (ACA). The YRTC facilities are required to maintain ACA accreditation.

## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

Changes will occur based on the needs of the current population. With that said, YRTC is required to follow statute and ACA standards for accreditation.

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### **Requirement 8:** Efforts to reduce the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations.

#### 1. Report how you have successfully reduced the disproportionate impact of the system and services on families and children of color and other populations, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC does not have control over the commitments to the state. YRTC-Lincoln accepts all youth who are adjudicated by the courts. YRTC-Lincoln will work with individual families to meet the needs for services, visits, transition home, etc.

## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

The population is consistently changing based on commitments to the state and YRTC. YRTC is dedicated to implementing individualized plans based on the needs of the youth and their family.

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### **Requirement 9:** Efforts to develop a youth board to assist in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard in the child-care institution and promoting and supporting normalcy.

#### 1. Report how your institution has successfully put forth the effort to develop a youth board that assists in implementing the reasonable and prudent parent standard to promote/support normalcy, and please provide a few examples:

YRTC-Lincoln serves a small census of youth for an average of 150 days for length of stay. Youth are encouraged to utilize the grievance system or two-way requests for program improvement, and their attorneys and the hotline (if applicable) to report misconduct.

## 2. What changes, if any, will you make to your normalcy plan going forward?

YRTC will consider designating a group or individual (due to census) eligible for representing the youths' perspectives for consideration while discussing facility functions.

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Official designated to be the caregiver who is authorized to apply the reasonable and prudent parent standard to decisions involving the participation of the child in age or developmentally appropriate activities:

Designee's Name: Sarah Brownell

Designee's Title: Facility Administrator

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Each child-care institution is required to notify in an age or developmentally appropriate manner, both verbally and in writing, all children placed at the institution of the process for making a request to participate in age or developmentally appropriate activities. Please identify the process used for providing such notification.

Orientation during admission. All youth review the youth handbook and sign an acknowledgment of receipt and understanding.

A written notice of this process is required to be posted in an accessible, public place in the child-care institution. Please identify everywhere this notification is posted.

Youth receive and acknowledge the youth handbook. Youth handbooks are also posted within the living units.

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