

S-217 PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



In this document, the non implicit gender applies to both men and women.

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(previously SE-19)

Policy

Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell encourages all children under its care to take part in sports, group and cultural activities to promote their integration into their foster family and their community, to encourage them to continue activities practiced before their placement and finally to allow them to develop their talents and a healthy interest in their development.

Staff and foster parents must encourage each child to take part in at least one sport, recreational or cultural activities outside their school activities. The Agency shall subsidize such activities, taking the practices and values of their family of origin and/or the foster family and the availability of activities in their community into account.

All requests to subsidize activities and/or buy equipment must take the expected duration of the child's placement into account. In general, the Agency may subsidize a group or sports activity when:

- it is expected to last at least as long as the placement;
- it is part of the foster family's regular routine;
- it promotes continuing an activity practiced with his family of origin.

Any equipment purchased for a child to practice a sport or activity shall belong to him.

Procedure

1. Criteria for purchasing equipment and subsidizing activities

- The child must show interest in and aptitude for the activity. The activity must promote interaction with other young people of his age, allowing him to make friends.
- Spending large amounts of money on a child placed short term is inappropriate. For example, it is inappropriate to buy used or new hockey equipment for a youth who will only be under our care for three months. However, skates or a hockey stick may be bought for that youth.
- The Agency may subsidize sports and group activities to continue an activity that was already begun before a child's placement and which allows him to maintain links to his past and continue this activity when he returns.
- In the case of a child placed following a voluntary care or temporary wardship agreement, the family's worker must consult his parents and inform them of the

choice of activities for their child and obtain their agreement and/or ensure that the child may continue this activity upon his return if he so wishes.

2. Sport activities

Placed children will be encouraged to participate in sports in their community. According to the principles of an active and healthy life, physical activity is a worthy means for children fitness. Sports provide opportunities to children to improve their athletic talents and benefit from being a member of a team or a club. Valoris also encourages parents to participate along with their children in sports or by volunteering, such as a coach.

3. Community activities

Through participation in community activities, placed children and their family may get a strong sense of belonging to the community. Informal encounters, meetings and social activities benefit social integration. Taking an active part in community activities enhances the child's social development.

4. Cultural activities

Valoris strongly promotes that placed children experience a wide range of cultural activities. We encourage foster parents to use local and regional resources such as museums, cultural and artistic centres, francophone centres, to expose children to a multitude of enriching events.

In the perspective of respect of culture, it is imperative that we encourage and support children in activities that enhance their cultural identity (such as race, language, religion). The uniqueness of each individual child must be acknowledged and celebrated. Furthermore, the child welfare worker and the parent must make efforts and provide the required support to allow children to participate in groups that comply with their individual needs such as sex, sexual orientation (lesbian, homosexual, bisexual and transexual), or heritage (native). It is imperative that these needs be clearly identified in the child's plan of care.

5. Activities and Spiritual Support

Upon placement of a child and at all revisions of his plan of care thereafter, the social welfare worker will discuss with the child or youth his right to religious or spiritual instruction, according to his religion affiliation or preference. Ideally, the child or youth may propose the name of a significant person in the spiritual community so that the social welfare worker may write it down in the child's file and ensure to maintain communication between them. During each revision of the child's plan of care, or more often as needed, the social welfare worker will address spiritual and religious needs with the child, and will ensure to clearly note this in his care program. At any time, the children will be encouraged by the social welfare worker and foster parents to actively participate in a religious or spiritual support of their choice and which is beneficial. To this end, the foster parent will be respectful of the religious diets of recognized religious groups. Finally, social welfare workers, volunteers, internship students and foster parents may not seek conversion, proselytism or even, to criticize faith groups.

6. Process to follow

In consultation with the family's welfare worker, if applicable, the child's welfare worker shall discuss the child's interests with him and his foster parents. He must

obtain the foster parents' support before authorizing the child to register for an activity. The statutory 30-day visit (V-30) or when developing the plan of care are good times for identifying one or more activities the child can participate in.

The foster parents must also inform the child's welfare worker and obtain his consent before registering a child in an activity.

The child's welfare worker must also discuss the foster parents' commitment to ensure they will be present and will transport the youth to the activity and to buy equipment, if applicable. The foster parents may also identify relatives or friends who can share the task of transporting children to those activities.

If an activity requires purchasing equipment, the Child Welfare Worker shall encourage the foster family to buy used equipment, particularly if the child is just beginning the activity. New equipment (particularly if it is expensive) may be bought when the child shows continued interest in and ability for the activity.

The Child Welfare Worker and the foster parents must determine whether the child/youth is able to contribute to the purchase of the equipment or help pay activity fees, taking the foster family's practices into account.

7. Training

All Valoris employees and foster parents will be informed of this policy during their orientation session once they are hired and/or their basic training. Moreover, Valoris will review this policy annually with employees and foster parents involved with children in care.

Definitions, annexes and references

Definition

Parents: Includes biological parents, adoptive parents, step-mother, step-father or all other persons responsible for the child previous to Valoris' involvement.

References

- F-203 Ontario Child Benefit Equivalent (OCBE) Pooled Fund
- Licensing Manual for Foster Homes, 2012 edition, CFSA