



# Practice Points

## MEDIA RELEASES FOR YOUTH 18 AND OVER

The purpose of this Practice Point is to update Children's Division practice regarding media releases for youth 18 and over to be consistent with Section 210.660, RSMo., the Reasonable and Prudent Parent legislation, also referred to as Normalcy. This statute was created to ensure children in foster care receive as close to a normal experience in their lives as possible, and engaging in normal activities without interference from agencies promotes this ideal.

In Section 210.660, RSMo., "age or developmentally-appropriate activities," are defined as "activities or items that are generally accepted as suitable for children of the same chronological age or level of maturity or that are determined to be developmentally-appropriate for a child, based on the development of cognitive, emotional, physical, and behavioral capacities that are typical for an age or age group;..."

At the age of 18, youth gain many rights including signing legal documents such as leases, banking documents and contracts. A media release is considered a legal document and will no longer require judicial approval when youth are 18 and over. When an opportunity arises to appear in media materials, youth 18 and over may sign their own releases.

Although signing a media release is consistent with an activity that is considered acceptable or suitable for other youth of the same chronological age, caregivers and child welfare practitioners should consider individual factors that affect a youth's ability to make this choice. The Children's Division prohibits the exploitation of children and supports a child's right to privacy. Depending on life experience, and the emotional, cognitive and behavioral capacities of youth, each may benefit from a different level of guidance to make a decision about their name or photograph's use in media materials. All of these factors should be considered when youth have the opportunity to appear in media materials.

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