

FOSTER YOUTH RIGHTS

HB24-1017

If you are living in foster care or participating in the Foster Youth in Transition Program, you have the rights listed below.

If you have questions or concerns, or if you want to learn more about your rights, please reach out to your Guardian ad Litem (GAL) or Counsel for Youth (CFY)!

FAIRNESS & SUPPORT

You have a right to:

- Be treated fairly and get the help you need. No matter things like where your family comes from, your skin color, your culture, the gender you identify with, who you love, or some other things that make you who you are.
- Have your own thoughts and beliefs.
- Attend or not attend cultural, ethnic, and religious activities.
- Dress, talk, act, etc. like the gender you identify with.
- Be referred to by the names and gender pronouns you chose.
- Not be threatened, punished, or treated badly because you asked questions, shared concerns, or made a complaint about a violation of your rights.
- Use the services, supports, placements, and programs you qualify for.
- Information about government money you qualify for, including written information about who (if anyone) is receiving government money on your behalf.

CONFIDENTIALITY & PRIVACY

You have a right to:

- Have your court records kept confidential, unless the law says they can be shared.
- Freedom from unreasonable searches, limits on your use of your things, or taking of your things.
- Reasonable amounts of privacy for phone calls, texts, emails, and mail.



PLACEMENT & CARE

You have a right to:

- Have people in your case consider where you want to live.
- Return to your parents if the law allows, with people considering where you want to live.
- Services and plans that focus on you returning to your family or finding another home.
- Court hearings without unnecessary delays.
- Decisions about where you will live without unnecessary delays.
- Adult guidance, support, and supervision that fits your needs in a safe, healthy, and comfortable place where you are treated with fairness, respect, and dignity.
- Be placed with a foster care provider who knows and understands your history related to your needs, and who has the knowledge and skills to provide for your needs.
- Freedom from abuse, physical punishment, or neglect.
- Freedom from being abandoned, locked somewhere, or physically separated from others, unless the law allows it.
- Live in a place that meets your needs. Receive services and supports needed to keep that placement.
- Have government money you qualify for used for your needs.

COMMUNICATION

You have a right to contact and communicate with the people listed below in a private place:

- People working on your behalf – like your caseworker, attorneys and people who work for your attorneys, mental health providers, and Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).
- People who can answer your questions, listen to your concerns, or take your complaints about your rights – like your attorney, the Child Protection Ombudsman, your county department of human services, or the state department of human services.

FOSTER YOUTH RIGHTS

EDUCATION

You have a right to:

- Receive a free education that meets your needs.
- Transportation to and from school.
- Participate in sports and cultural, personal, and social activities that fit your age and needs.
- Use computers and the internet, as needed for your education.
- To remain in your school if your placement changes, unless it is not in your best interests.

HEALTH CARE

You have a right to:

- Medical, dental, vision, mental health, and substance use care that meets your needs.
- Reproductive and sexual health care as allowed by law.
- Freedom from taking prescriptions unless taking the medications is required by law.
- Use your prescription medications - even if your placement changes.
- Receive notice of prescriptions and their purpose.

BASIC NEEDS

You have a right to:

- Food, clothing, and hygiene products and services that fit your culture and gender identity.
- An allowance or opportunities to work that fit your age and needs, including chances to use and learn the value of money by buying things you choose to buy.
- Have your own things, wear your own clothes, and have a safe place to store your things.
- Have your things moved in luggage if you change placement.



PARTICIPATION

You have a right to:

- Attend and fully participate in your court hearings and access appropriate transportation to and from court. Be heard separately by a judge or magistrate – when necessary.
- Have people you want at your court hearings.
- Talk with your judge or magistrate about your long-term placement plan.
- A GAL and/or CFY.
- Receive information about, and participate in the making of, your case plan - when allowed by law and when it fits your age and needs.
- Participate in meetings about your case when it fits your age and needs. Have people you want at your meetings.

BECOMING AN ADULT

You have a right to:

- Receive help getting a bank account and learn how to keep and spend money – when it fits your age and needs.
- Receive information about work and school opportunities.
- Work and grow your work skills, if permitted by law and when it fits your age and needs.
- Receive free yearly credit reports and other protections from identity theft required by law.
- Receive important documents when you are 18 and leave foster care.
- Receive notice of the Foster Youth in Transition Program (FYTP) when you turn 16.
- Receive help applying for government money and other programs you qualify for.
- Receive driver's education when you are 15 or older.

**Do you have questions or concerns about your rights?
Ask your GAL or CFY for more information!**