

FOSTER YOUTH BILL OF RIGHTS

A Guide to Your Rights in Foster Care



Personal Rights

- You have the right to be free from physical verbal and emotional abuse and inhumane treatment.
- You have the right to be protected from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.
- You have the right to have your own money:
 - Earn your own money.
 - Have a bank account.
 - Be provided with guidance on how to save and spend money.
- You have the right to receive guidance, support, and supervision from adults in your lives, including parents, resource caregivers, agency staff, mentors, youth advisory boards, and others.
- You have the right to participate in age-appropriate extracurricular, enrichment and social activities.
- You have the right to protection from discrimination or harassment based on race, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, color, or national origin.
- You have the right to privacy and personal belongings.
- You have the right to receive timely and consistent access to:
 - Housing that is clean and safe.
 - Food, including special food considerations.
 - Clothing appropriate for your age and gender identity, including the right to choose your own clothes.



Religious Rights

- You have the right to enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, and religion including the right to not practice religion.



Medical Rights

- You have the right to receive:
 - Medical care.
 - Dental care.
 - Vision care.
 - Mental Health Services.
- You have the right to schedule appointments or have appointments scheduled for you.
- You have the right to be taken to these appointments.



Communication Rights

- The phone numbers for CASA, GAL, attorney, custodial agency worker, custodial agency hotline, probation officer and any other professionals involved must be available to you.
- You have the right to visit and communicate with your parents, siblings, other family members, non-related kin, friends, and significant others that you are not living with, in accordance with your plan.



Legal Rights

- You have the right to contact your attorney, CASA, GAL within 24 hours of the request.
- You have the right to have your opinions heard and be included when any decisions are being made affecting your life.
- You have the right to be invited to and prepared for meetings and court hearings and provided with information about your permanency options.



Educational Rights

- You have the right to go to school.
- You have the right to have input in selecting the school you attend.
- You have the right to participate in educational and school-related activities.
- Youth ages 14 and over have the right to access information about vocational and college education classes and financial aid to pay for those.

There are times when an agency can temporarily restrict these rights, for your or others' health and safety. If you feel your rights have been violated unfairly, you can talk to your foster parent, your caseworker, your GAL or CASA, or another trusted adult. **You can also reach out to the Youth Ombudsman by calling 1-877-649-6884 (OH-YOUTH) or completing the online complaint form at: youthombudsman.ohio.gov.** They cannot change court-ordered decisions, respond to emergencies, provide legal advice or investigate allegations of child abuse or neglect. The Youth Ombudsman will work with you to resolve complaints and advocate for your rights to be protected while in foster care.