



**COLORADO**

**Office of Children,  
Youth & Families**

Division of Child Welfare

## The Rights of Youth in Foster Care (Ages 14 to 18)

*[Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute 19-7-101 and Colorado Code of Regulations 7.708.33 and 7.305.2(E)]*

### Education and Employment

1. You have a right to receive a good education, with access to transportation, and opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities, when appropriate.
2. You have the right to remain in the school where you are enrolled when you enter placement, unless the court decides that changing schools is in your best interest.
3. You have a right to know the educational options available to you, including, but not limited to, the coursework necessary for vocational and postsecondary educational programs, and information about financial aid available to help you pay for your education.
4. You have the right to work and develop job skills as appropriate to your permanency goals and case plan.
5. You have a right to attend independent living classes if you meet the program and age requirements.

### Health

1. You have a right to receive adequate and appropriate medical, dental, vision and mental health services when you need them.
2. You have a right to refuse to take medicine or other substances not given to you by a doctor.
3. You have a right to adequate and healthy food.

### Visitation and Contact with Family and Supportive Adults

1. You have a right to communicate with people significant to you, such as your parent, guardian, current therapist, physician or religious advisor.
2. You have a right to contact the people working on your behalf, including your caseworker, attorney, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), probation officer, and other advocates or supports.
3. ® You have a right to have access to telephones and to make and receive calls in private, when appropriate and in agreement with your permanency plan.
4. ® You have a right to send and receive unopened mail, when appropriate and in agreement with your permanency plan. You also have the right to have access to letter-writing materials, including postage, and to have your foster parent(s) help you if you're not able to write, prepare or send your mail.
5. You have a right to have contact with people outside of foster care, like teachers, church members, mentors and friends, when appropriate.
6. You have the right to live with or visit with your siblings.
7. ® You have a right to opportunities to meet with your visitors.



## **Court and Case Participation and Legal Issues**

1. You have the right to consult with the court about the permanency goal in your case. The court **MUST** get your input. This means you can go to court and talk with the judge directly, you can write a letter to the judge, or you can talk with your team about your wishes.
2. You have the right to consent to an adoption. Before the court finishes an adoption, you have to consent. Talk with your team about this decision. It cannot happen without your agreement.
3. Your case plan must be developed with your input and you have the right to be informed of any changes to the plan.
4. You have the right to invite up to two supportive adults of your choice, other than your caseworker and foster parent(s), to be a part of your case planning team and to advocate on your behalf, as long as those people are appropriate and they represent your best interests.
5. You have a right to have your opinions heard and considered, to the greatest extent possible, when any decisions are being made that affect your life.
6. You have a right to the confidentiality of your juvenile court records, consistent with the law.

## **Safety and Exploitation**

1. You have the right to receive appropriate and reasonable adult guidance, support and supervision.
2. You have a right to live in a clean, safe and healthy environment.
3. You have the right to be treated with respect and dignity.
4. You have the right to be free from physical abuse or neglect and punishment that causes you pain or discomfort.
5. You have a right to be free from emotional abuse or punishment that causes you to be humiliated or shamed.
6. You have the right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation or abuse.
7. You have a right to contact the child protection ombudsman, county department of social services, or the department of human services when you have questions, concerns or when you think your rights have been violated. You have a right to talk with those people privately, without threats of punishment for making complaints.
8. You have a right to be free from abandonment by your care-giver.
9. You have a right to be free from being locked in a room.
10. You have a right to fair and equal access to services, placement, care, treatment and benefits based on your treatment plan.
11. You have a right to not be discriminated against or harassed based on your race, ethnic group, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.

## **Annual Credit Reports and Vital Life Documents**

1. You have a right to receive a free annual credit report from each of the three credit reporting agencies, and to have those credit reports explained to you in a way you understand.
2. If your credit report shows inaccuracies, you have a right to receive services to help resolve those inaccuracies.



3. If you turn age 18 while in foster care and you have been in care for at least 6 months, you have a right to receive the following documents, unless there is not a record of your birth or identity.
  - a. A certified birth certificate or, an alien registration card (green card);
  - b. Tribal affiliation information if you are American Indian or Alaskan Native;
  - c. Your Social Security Card;
  - d. A state ID card or driver's license;
  - e. Your health passport, other health related records, health care decision-making information, and information about your health insurance; and,
  - f. Your educational records.

### Money and Belongings

- ® You have a right to receive an adequate allowance, and to keep and spend a reasonable sum of your own money, when appropriate.
- You have a right to maintain a bank account and manage your personal money, when appropriate and not restricted by your case plan.
- ® You have a right to receive adequate clothing and to wear your own clothes.
- ® You have a right keep and use your own personal belongings and to store them in a safe place.

### Privacy and Beliefs

- You have the right to a reasonable amount of privacy.
- You have a right to attend religious services and activities.
- You have a right to your personal belief of what is right or wrong (conscience).
- You have a right to your own cultural and ethnic practices.

### **You have a right to have these rights explained to you in a way that you understand.**

® = Rights that may be limited to reasonable periods during the day or restricted according to the routine of the foster family home to ensure the protection of the youth and family.

Sign below if you were given a copy of these rights and if these rights were explained to you in a way that you understand.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Youth Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Worker Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Worker Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

