

Your Rights in Foster Care

The Foster Youth Bill of Rights is part of [Louisiana's law](#) (La. R.S. 46:286.16), and it means you have the right to:

1. Know What is Happening to You

- Understand why you are in foster care.
- Meet your DCFS caseworker, who will be sure you have what you need.
 - Your caseworker will be the person who sets up meetings and works to move your case forward.
- Have an attorney that the judge in your case will appoint for you. The judge might also decide to appoint a CASA to your case.
- Have the names, cell phone numbers and email addresses for your caseworker, attorney and CASA volunteer. You have the right to meet with them on a regular basis.

CASA Volunteer ?

CASA stands for [Court Appointed Special Advocate](#). The judge in your case will decide if you should have one. Your CASA will spend time with you, ask you how you feel about what is happening, and be someone recommends to the court what is in your best interest.

- Know about and participate in any planning meetings about your DCFS case. Planning meetings are times when your foster care caseworker, your parents, your foster caregivers and other people who support you get together to set goals for your foster care case and talk about the progress.
- Have up to three supportive adults of your choice be part of your planning team.
- Attend all court hearings about your case.

All the adults involved in your case should care about you, your safety, and your wishes for your future. The Foster Youth Bill of Rights allows you to speak up for yourself and have others on your team who will speak up for you, too.

Report Abuse or Neglect

If you experience abuse or neglect in your foster home, **call 1-855-4LA-KIDS (1-855-452-5437)** toll-free, 24/7. There is an option to choose **just for you** to make a report to the Louisiana Child Safety Response Center.

If Your Rights are Violated

If your rights as a youth in foster care have not been honored, you should:

1. Share your concerns with your caseworker first.
2. If your caseworker is not helpful, contact his or her supervisor. The supervisor will make sure you are listened to and not retaliated against.
3. If you have a CASA volunteer, share with him or her, too. Your CASA can speak out on your behalf if you would like.
4. Share with your attorney.
5. You can also reach out to the Louisiana Ombudsman's office at kids4la@lla.la.gov or 1-833-543-7452.

Keep speaking up until you find someone who listens to you.

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Foster Youth Bill of Rights



**Know Your Rights,
Speak Up
for Yourself**



**Department of
Children & Family Services**
Building a Stronger Louisiana

Your Rights in Foster Care

continued

2. Feel Safe & Comfortable

- Know your private information will only be shared with people who truly need to have it.
- Tell your caseworker or foster family about your problems or needs without getting in trouble.
 - If there is an emergency or you are not safe, your caseworker may need to share with his or her supervisor, call 911, or make a police report.
- Not be treated badly by anyone because of your race, sex, religion, or where you are from.
- Keep following your own traditions and religion. You do not have to join in religious activities that you don't believe in.

3. Have Your Basic Needs Met

- Live with a foster family that cares for you and supports you in a stable home.
- Have regular meals, adequate clothing and shelter.
- Get regular medical checkups and be able to see a doctor for any physical or mental needs that come up.
- Receive any trauma-based counseling and therapeutic services needed.
- Receive the entire amount of your monthly allowance. ?

? Trauma-Based Counseling

Counseling provided by a mental health professional (like a psychologist, psychiatrist, or licensed social worker), that considers trauma you might have experienced by being removed from your home and placed into foster care. Trauma includes your physical, mental, and emotional response to what has happened to you.

4. Have a Normal Life

- Not be abused or neglected in any way in your foster home.
- Go to the same school as before, if possible.
 - If you have been expelled, or there are safety concerns with you attending your old school, or you are placed with a foster family who lives too far away, you will need to attend a different school.
- Have access to a computer and the internet for schoolwork, tutoring, or looking at college info. If you need extra help with tests, you can get it.
- Take part in school clubs, dances, sports teams and field trips. Be given the supplies and uniforms you need to join in.
- Take driver's education classes.
- Get a part-time job near your foster home and get help with rides to and from work.

5. Stay Connected to Family, Friends, & Your Community

- See your parents and brothers and sisters.
 - You should be able to see them once a month, either in person or on a video call, or at least talk to them on the phone.
 - If you do not have contact with them, ask your caseworker to explain why. It could be that the court has limited their ability to see you out of concern for your safety.
- Be able to call or visit with approved friends at least once a month.
- Go to activities that are part of DCFS' Independent Living Skills Services.
 - These are services and training that teach you basic life skills and help you prepare for adulthood.
- Know about groups in your area where you can speak up for yourself and meet other youth in foster care.

6. Ask for Changes

You have the right to speak up and ask for changes in your care plan.

- Let your caseworker, your attorney, your CASA and/or the judge know if you disagree with decisions being made about you and your future.
- Request a meeting with your caseworker, parents, foster caregivers, or your whole team to talk about your needs and wishes.
- Ask for another therapist if you feel your needs are not being met.
- Ask the judge in your case for a new attorney if you feel the attorney appointed for you is not supporting what you want for your care plan in court.

Your Contacts

Case Worker

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Attorney

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

CASA (if appointed one)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Doctor

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Medical Insurance

Provider: _____

ID Number: _____

Phone: _____