

# Bill of Rights



## Youth Matter

As a youth age 13 and older in placed in a setting outside of your family you have the right:

- To know:
  - Why you are placed outside of your family?
  - What will happen to you?
  - What is happening to your family (including siblings) and how you and the local department of social services will help you plan your future?
- To live in a safe, healthy, and comfortable home and be treated with respect.
- To be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- To fair treatment, whatever your gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, medical needs, and/or sexual orientation.
- To visit and have regular contact with your parents, siblings, other family members (unless court order limits your contact) and to have your caseworker explain specific visitation opportunities and/or restrictions to you and as written in your case record.
- To be involved and actively participate in the development of your placement and permanency plan, and be informed of any changes to those plans as early as 12 years old.
- To fair and equal access to available services, placements, care, treatment, and benefits.
- To attend court hearings, speak with the Judge and/or Magistrate and receive a copy of the court documents for your records.
- To attend school and participate in extracurricular, cultural, and personal enrichment activities, consistent with your age and developmental level with minimal disruption to school attendance and school stability.
- To be involved in your educational planning.
- To have social contacts with people outside your home placement, including teachers, church members, mentors, and friends.
- To work and develop job skills, consistent with your age and developmental level.
- To access information on Tuition Assistance, Educational Training Vouchers (ETV), job training, and internship opportunities.

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- To request a meeting with your caseworker and foster/resource parents if there are concerns about your current living arrangement.
- To have your own bed while in your placement home.
- To speak and be spoken to in your own language when possible.
- NOT to share a room with an adult.
- To receive adequate and healthy meals in your placement home.
- To receive adequate clothing in your placement home.
- To store your belongings in a safe place.
- To have privacy when you take a bath, shower, and get dressed.
- NOT to be locked in a room, building, or facility premises.
- To contact your caseworker, social worker, attorney, youth advocate, supporters and/or CASA worker when appropriate.
- To confidentially contact the local Administration regarding violations of your rights and be free of threats or punishment for making complaints.
- To make and receive confidential phone calls and send and receive unopened mail unless prohibited by court order.
- To receive medical, dental, vision care, and developmental & mental health services that are paid for through the Maryland Medical Assistance Program. These services include a yearly physical and eye exam and dental examinations twice a year.
- To be free from the administration of medication or chemical substances unless authorized by a medical provider
- To tell your caseworker that you are no longer interested in placement through the local department of social services after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- To understand what expectations and benefits you receive if you stay in a placement through the local department of social services after your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday,
- To remain in placement until your 21<sup>st</sup> birthday if you are not fully prepared to exit care.
- To re-enter care if you leave placement out-of-home care after you are 18 years old until 20.6 years old and meet the criteria for Enhanced aftercare.
- To receive an annual credit report, and assistance in fixing inaccuracies if you are at least 14 years old or older.
- To participate in age and developmentally appropriate programs offered through the Administration or any other appropriate state agency that assists youth in your placement to achieve self-sufficiency after leaving care.
- To receive an “Annual Notice of Benefits” notification annually.
- To receive a copy of the rights described in the “Bill of Rights” and to have these rights fully explained by the Administration consistent with your age and developmental level and understanding.

