

Foster Youth of North Carolina Bill of Rights

All children and youth in care in the state of North Carolina have the right to . . .

Have lifelong family connections:

- Youth have a right to visitation, contact and knowledge of their parents, siblings, and extended family.
- Youth who are pregnant and/or have children should have the right to raise, be involved in the decisions made in reference to their child, and make decisions for their child(ren).
- Youth have a right to have a list of contact information of all family members.
- Youth have a right to visit family at least once a week.

Live with, be loved by and cared for by caregivers:

- Youth have the right to their own permanency.
- Youth have the right to be placed in a home that meets their community needs including school, faith organizations, social groups, recreation, etc.
- Youth have the right to live in a safe and comfortable environment that they can call home.
- Youth have the right to hold their caregivers accountable.
- Youth have the right to live with extended family member(s).
- Youth have the right to keep personal belongings with them and receive respect in reference to age appropriate privacy.
- Youth have the right to be in appropriate placement where they are protected.
- Youth have the right to save any money earned.
- Age appropriate youth have the right to receive a biological summary of potential caregiver(s) and make a recommendation regarding their placement with such caregiver(s).

Be who they are:

- Youth have the right to their identity values, hopes, plans and goals, as well as the freedom to express their emotions in an appropriate way..
- Youth have the right to learn about their sexuality in a safe, supportive, and judgmentally free environment.
- Youth have the right to privacy to journals/diary, letters, mail, emails, appropriate phone calls, and other personal belongings.
- Youth have the right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.
- Youth have the right to be free of discrimination based on race, religion, disability, sexual preference, nationality, gender, and age.

Be included in their case planning and have access to records:

- Youth have the right to meaningfully participate in Family Team meetings, Treatment Team meetings, court, and school meetings.

- Youth have the right to have family or other supportive people of their choice present at their team meetings.
- Youth have the right to have monthly visits from social worker and have their calls returned.
- Youth have the right to access resources and able to seek other resources.
- Youth have the right to knowledge about what is recorded in their case records.
- Youth have the right to only be discharged if a discharge plan is in place.
- Youth have the right to obtain identification and permanent documents such as birth certificate, social security card, and health and education records by age 16.
- Youth have the right to know and understand why their placement changed.
- Youth have a right to closure with caregivers regarding placement changes.

Youth have a right to different resources and receive a high quality education and participate in extracurricular activities:

- LINKS services should be available from ages 16 to 21 *(23 if in college)*.
- Youth have the right to an adequate education.
- Youth have the right to participate in any school activities.
- Youth have the right to enjoy any school activity and not be restricted simply because of their placement or status.
- Youth have the right to a transition plan *(within what time frame and who ultimately has responsibility?)* and process when they leave care.
- Youth have the right to continue relationships when they exit care with individuals who have helped them while in care.

If these rights have been violated or you feel like something is wrong; youth can:

- talk with your caseworker or supervisor
- file a complaint with DSS
- contact your GAL
- speak with the judge directly, or
- participate in SAYSO events and make change in the system

Youths have the right to initiate a complaint to the DSS Program Manager if these rights are not upheld.

Youth Name

Youth Signature

Caseworker Name

Caseworker Signature