

# Youth



**Empowerment and Safety**

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**1-855-840-6036**



## DID YOU KNOW THAT AS A YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE, YOU HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS?

We hope that whether you are about to be placed or have been in foster care for a while, you will find the information helpful. The pamphlet gives you some how to's and necessary information to help you with your transition to adulthood. You will also find some helpful links and resources.

Your caseworker and other members of your team can also help.

Your "team" may consist of your caseworker, CASA, attorney, foster parent, LLP Provider, or any other Supportive Adult you

would like to include.

## HOW DO I GET A BANK ACCOUNT WHILE I AM IN FOSTER CARE?

**Rules can really vary** so it is best to check with your local bank or

credit union in your community. For example, some credit unions may allow a youth to open a savings account at age 12 or older with or

without a parent's or guardian's permission; you must have acceptable identification (see below for examples) and a minimum deposit. The

amount of deposit can vary depending on the type of account.

Your caseworker and other members of your team can help you by making sure you have **at least** the following documents:

- ★ Your Social Security card with matching name and number;
- ★ Your birth certificate;
- ★ A driver's license, other form of Oregon identification or a lawful permanent resident (LPR) card.

For additional information and tips on managing your money wisely, budgeting, credit and other financial advice:

Teens can check out: [www.handsonbanking.org/htdocs/en/t/](http://www.handsonbanking.org/htdocs/en/t/)

Young adults can check out: [www.handsonbanking.org/htdocs/en/y/](http://www.handsonbanking.org/htdocs/en/y/)

## HOW DO I GET A DRIVER'S LICENSE IF I AM UNDER 18 AND IN FOSTER CARE?

Your caseworker and team should agree that you are ready for this big responsibility. You will find a great tool to help you with that decision

at [www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety\\_model/procedure\\_manual/ch04/ch4-section3.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety_model/procedure_manual/ch04/ch4-section3.pdf)

Here's another handy resource to use with your caseworker:

[www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety\\_model/procedure\\_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-29.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety_model/procedure_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-29.pdf).

**If you are in the care and custody of DHS, you will need**

**permission from the agency (DHS program manager or branch designee - usually the branch manager) to get your driver's**

**permit and/or license.** The following link has all of the requirements for obtaining a driver's permit or driver's license: [www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/teen/pages/license.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/teen/pages/license.aspx)

In addition, here is a link to a DMV guide that helps walk you

through the process: [www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety\\_model/procedure\\_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-28.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/csf/safety_model/procedure_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-28.pdf)

You can develop the safe driving skills to get a driver's license by taking a driver's education course. Financial assistance may be available to help

with those costs. However, you must be covered by insurance on the car you will be driving and DHS is **not** responsible for insurance premiums.

## IF I WANT TO, CAN I STAY IN FOSTER CARE AFTER TURNING 18?

It may be possible to remain in care after you turn age 18. Talk to your caseworker and your team (including the judge) about your options.

Your own participation in planning for your transition and future will help ensure your ideas and dreams are being heard and can receive

assistance and supports to reach your educational, independent living skills and housing goals. To access services after you leave foster care,

you will need to go to the local DHS Child Welfare office and request "voluntary services."

## HOW DO I ACCESS THE TUITION AND FEE WAIVER?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) is used as the application for Oregon's Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver. To qualify, you must meet both foster care and higher

education requirements.

For the foster care eligibility requirements, you must:

- ★ Have been in foster care under the care and custody of Oregon's DHS Child Welfare or one of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes' child welfare for at least 180 days after age 14; AND
- ★ Not leave foster care and custody prior to your 16th birthday.

For the higher education requirements, you must:

- ★ Enroll at one of Oregon's public colleges or universities for undergraduate studies;

- ★ Qualify for financial aid;
- ★ Complete 30 hours of volunteer activities (to maintain eligibility for the waiver in year two and the following years).

**Note:** You need to enroll prior to age 25. If you are still in the program at age 25, you can continue receiving the waiver until you have met the equivalent of four years of undergraduate studies (as long as you are making satisfactory progress).

For additional information, go to [www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/LLP/Pages/Financial-Aid.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/LLP/Pages/Financial-Aid.aspx).

## HOW DO I GET A COPY OF MY CREDIT REPORT?

Talk to your caseworker and your team. Federal law requires DHS to provide credit reports to you as a youth in DHS's legal custody

beginning at age 14 and every year after that until you are no longer in the legal custody of DHS. DHS is also required to help youth in foster

care identify and resolve any issues on your credit report. Be sure you have a copy of your Social Security card and birth certificate; the credit

bureaus require this identification to help resolve any credit issues. For more information about youth credit and resources, go to [www.aect.org/~media/Pubs/Topics/Child%20Welfare%20Permanence/Other/YouthandCredit/YouthandCredit.pdf](http://www.aect.org/~media/Pubs/Topics/Child%20Welfare%20Permanence/Other/YouthandCredit/YouthandCredit.pdf).

## HOW DO I GET MEDICAL, DENTAL, VISION AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES OR OTHER TREATMENT (INCLUDING SERVICES AND TREATMENTS AVAILABLE WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF MY PARENT, FOSTER PARENT OR CASEWORKER)?

If you are in foster care, you have an Oregon Health Plan (OHP)

medical card. OHP covers these services. If you are 14 years of age or older, you are legally **allowed** to obtain **some** medical treatment

without your parents' or caseworker's consent. However, it is a good idea to talk to your caseworker and/or foster parent about any

questions or concerns you may have. For more information, go to

**OHA Minor Rights: Access and Consent to Health Care Guide and ORS 109.610-109.685 (Rights of Minors):** & <http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/Youth/Documents/MinorConsent2012.pdf> & [www.oregon.gov/blsw/pdfs/chapter109rights\\_of\\_minors.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw/pdfs/chapter109rights_of_minors.pdf)

If you are 18 or older and aging out of Oregon state or tribal foster care,

you are eligible for the Former Foster Care Youth Medical (FFCYM) Program that ends at age 26. For more information, go to: [www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/LLP/Pages/Resources.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/LLP/Pages/Resources.aspx) (Health Care

menu option).



## WHEN I LEAVE FOSTER CARE, WHAT DOCUMENTS SHOULD I HAVE?

Upon leaving foster care you may request a copy of your Birth Certificate, Social Security Card (or number), Health insurance information, medical records, and a Driver's License or other form of state photo ID.

## HOW DO I MAKE SURE I AM INCLUDED IN PLANNING FOR MY FUTURE?

It is very important that you take part in planning your future. It is, after all, your life. Talk to your caseworker and your team (including your foster parents) about your wishes, goals and any concerns you may have. Being involved in your own transition planning and knowing what your resources and options are helps your ideas, wants and needs be heard. Your team and supportive adults can assist you in reaching your goals. When you are 14 years old or older, you should go over the goals on your transition plan (also known as the T2) every six months until you leave foster care. For additional information, go to [www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual/1/i-b235.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/policy/childwelfare/manual/1/i-b235.pdf)

[www.dhs.state.or.us/caf/safety\\_model/procedure\\_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-18.pdf](http://www.dhs.state.or.us/caf/safety_model/procedure_manual/appendices/ch4-app/4-18.pdf);

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/docs/transitionstoolkitchecklist.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostercare/docs/transitionstoolkitchecklist.pdf) and

[www.fosterclub.com/transition/article/transition-toolkit](http://www.fosterclub.com/transition/article/transition-toolkit)

## DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS WHILE YOU ARE IN FOSTER CARE, AND THERE IS SOMEONE IN THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO HELP YOU IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS?

Look for the "Oregon Foster Children's Bill of Rights" posted in your foster parent's home or residential facility. That poster will review your rights while in foster care.

Your caseworker will give you a copy of the bill of rights within 60 days of your placement in foster/substitute care. You and your caseworker will review the bill of rights.

Here are some other resources to contact if you have concerns about your care or that your rights or needs are not being respected:

**Youth Empowerment & Safety (Y.E.S.) line:** 1-855-840-6036

**Foster Care Ombudsman Office:** [www.oregon.gov/dhs/aboutdhs/Pages/fostercare-ombudsman.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/aboutdhs/Pages/fostercare-ombudsman.aspx)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS, CONTACT THE FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN OFFICE OR THE Y.E.S. LINE:**

Email: [fco.info@state.or.us](mailto:fco.info@state.or.us)

Phone: 1-855-840-6036

Fax: 503-378-6532

Mail: 500 Summer St. N.E., E-17  
Salem, OR 97301

## OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

# AS A CHILD OR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE, HOW DO I...?



This document can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request this publication in another format or language, contact 503-379-3496 or 503-379-3598. TTY:



# OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Child's or youth's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Case number/OR-Kids number: \_\_\_\_\_

Caseworker \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Certifier \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Certifier's supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Branch manager \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

After-hours phone number in case of an emergency (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

\* Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

\* Independent Living Program (ILP) provider \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

Local Citizen Review Board (CRB) Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

1-855-840-6036

[FCO.Info@state.or.us](mailto:FCO.Info@state.or.us)

**Y.E.S. (Youth, Empowerment & Safety) line**  
Foster Care Ombudsman \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

## IF IN A FOSTER CARE AGENCY OR RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Licensing staff \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

## IF AN ICWA CASE

Tribal affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ Tribal worker \_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

## OTHER SUPPORTIVE ADULTS AND ADVOCATES

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone/email \_\_\_\_\_

Date provided to child/youth \_\_\_\_\_ DHS staff providing/explaining list to youth \_\_\_\_\_ Role \_\_\_\_\_

[www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostrercare/pages/ind\\_living/ilp.rsp](http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/fostrercare/pages/ind_living/ilp.rsp)

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## OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

# I HAVE THE RIGHT TO:



**S** SAFE HOME WHERE I FEEL PROTECTED

**A** ATTEND SCHOOL, SPORTS, CLUBS AND ACTIVITIES

**F** FAMILY – LIVE WITH A FAMILY THAT CARES ABOUT ME AND PROTECTS ME

**E** EAT AND HAVE HEALTHY FOOD AT EVERY MEAL

**T** THINGS – TO HAVE MY OWN THINGS (TOYS, CLOTHES, BLANKET...)

**Y** YES, I CAN ALWAYS CONTACT MY ATTORNEY, CASEWORKER, CASA OR FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

## WHO CAN I CALL?

If you wish to make a call and need an adult to help, you can ask a foster parent or caregiver at the home, a teacher, a church member or another adult friend that you trust.

**Call or email the Foster Care Ombudsman at the Youth, Empowerment and Safety (Y.E.S.) Line at 1-855-840-6036 or [FCO.info@state.or.us](mailto:FCO.info@state.or.us).**



## OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S BILL OF RIGHTS

### AS A CHILD OR YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE,

# I HAVE THE RIGHT:

### TO HAVE WHAT EVERY CHILD NEEDS:

- ★ A permanent family
- ★ A home where I am part of the family and am treated as such
- ★ Nutritious food that meets my dietary needs
- ★ Clean and appropriate clothes that fit me and correspond to a gender identity of my choice
- ★ Safe housing
- ★ Free access to soap, shampoo, toothpaste and other hygiene needs that are necessary for my gender, age, individual health and ethnic needs
- ★ A safe and appropriate sleeping arrangement and adequate space for my personal belongings
- ★ To keep my belongings, including things I buy and gifts I receive, if I have to move
- ★ Access to a working telephone

### TO BE SAFE:

- ★ To be treated with respect
- ★ To be appropriately disciplined
- ★ To be protected from physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse including exploitation and trafficking
- ★ To tell my caseworker, judge or the Foster Care Ombudsman when contact with someone is hurtful to me or inappropriate so that I can be protected without fear of retaliation
- ★ To be free from group punishment

### TO SEE AND TALK TO PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT:

- ★ To visit and communicate with a parent or guardian, siblings, members of my family, and other significant people in my life, knowing that reasonable limits may be set by DHS and the court
- ★ To visit and communicate with friends and other significant people except when DHS or the court determines that contact may be unsafe or emotionally harmful
- ★ To participate in age appropriate activities with my peers, so long as the activity is not restricted by DHS and the court

### TO BE HEALTHY:

- ★ To have routine check-ups to keep me healthy
- ★ To see a nurse or a doctor if I am sick and request medical attention
- ★ To have the medical, dental, and mental health care I need with a qualified appropriate provider
- ★ To be included in discussions and make decisions about my own body and my physical or mental health
- ★ To have or receive comprehensible information about me and my family's medical history as appropriate and authorized by law

### TO LEARN:

- ★ To be provided with age-appropriate educational opportunities and schooling to prepare me for adult life
- ★ To have the opportunity to participate in activities that interest me; including sports, art, music or others
- ★ To receive extra help and tutoring if I am struggling in my school or educational placement
- ★ To make choices about my classes (electives, advanced placement, or college prep) and schools when the law allows me to
- ★ To receive age-appropriate information and assistance with enrolling in college or vocational education

### TO HAVE MY RIGHTS PROTECTED:

- ★ To have an attorney if I want one, and to request the judge appoint a CASA to my case
- ★ To talk to my attorney in private
- ★ To talk to my CASA in private
- ★ To be notified of court hearings, reviews by the Citizen Review Board, and what is being decided about me and my family, taking into account my age and developmental stage
- ★ To be invited to and provided transportation to court, taking into account my age and developmental stage, and to be able to talk to the judge in court about what I want and need
- ★ To decide whether or not I want my attorney and/or CASA to speak for me
- ★ To call the Foster Care Ombudsman Office (free from retaliation from my foster parents or anyone else) if my rights are violated or my needs are not being met

### TO BE IN A PLACE THAT MEETS MY NEEDS:

- ★ To be in a foster care placement close to my family so that I can visit and maintain relationships important to me, if it's safe and in my best interest, and as deemed by my case plan, visitation plan, or the court
- ★ To have reasonable access to my bedroom in the house or residence where I am living
- ★ To have a curfew and house rules that are clear and fair and to have them explained to me from the beginning

### TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR MYSELF:

- ★ To tell the court where I want to live and whether or not I want to be adopted
- ★ To receive respect, be nurtured, and attend activities in accordance with my background, religious heritage, race, and culture within reasonable guidelines. To be allowed to dress and groom myself according to my culture, identity and within good hygiene standards for my health
- ★ To determine and express my gender and sexual identity for myself
- ★ To make major decisions that affect my life, in accordance with the law, my age and ability

### TO BE INFORMED:

- ★ About financial support available to me, including allowance, obtaining a bank account and getting a job
- ★ About services and programs within or outside of the Department of Human Services that can provide me with support
- ★ About where I can go for help
- ★ About how the child welfare system works
- ★ About how to access my case records at no charge
- ★ About documents I will receive upon leaving foster care regarding my education, health and employment such as my birth certificate, Social Security card (or number) driver's license or other form of state photo ID

**I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ADULTS IN MY LIFE MAKE RULES AND SET LIMITS TO PROTECT ME AND HELP ME MAKE GOOD DECISIONS. WHEN I NEED TO, I CAN CONTACT MY ATTORNEY OR CASA ADVOCATE TO HELP ME AND TALK TO THEM PRIVATELY. IF I EVER NEED TO DO SO, I CAN CONTACT THE FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN AT **YOUTH, EMPOWERMENT AND SAFETY (Y.E.S.) 1-855-840-6036** OR [FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US](mailto:FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US) AND TALK TO THEM ABOUT MY PROBLEM.**

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# OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S SIBLING BILL OF RIGHTS I HAVE THE RIGHT:

- ★ To live in the same home as my siblings if possible
- ★ To see and talk to my siblings in person, through letters, by phone, email or in other electronic ways
- ★ To help make a plan that lists how my siblings and I will see and talk to each other
- ★ To be able to talk and visit with my siblings in a natural setting with privacy
- ★ To be told why I cannot live with, talk to or see my siblings if I am not able to
- ★ To have help with transportation so that I can see and talk to my siblings
- ★ To live with foster parents who are trained on the importance of sibling relationships
- ★ To work with caseworkers who are trained on the importance of sibling relationships
- ★ To have continued sibling contact and visits encouraged whenever my siblings or I are going to be in a guardianship or adoption
- ★ To be told when my siblings who are in foster care experience life events including emergencies or changes in their living situations
- ★ To request that my attorney advocate for me and represent my wishes for seeing and talking with my siblings

**THERE ARE ADULTS IN MY LIFE WHO MAKE RULES AND SET LIMITS TO MAKE SURE MY ACTIVITIES AND THE PEOPLE IN MY LIFE ARE SAFE AND APPROPRIATE.**

# OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S SIBLING BILL OF RIGHTS TIPS AND IDEAS

The Oregon Foster Children's Sibling Bill of Rights gives children and youth in foster care specific rights designed to protect and strengthen their bond with siblings. These rights include but are not limited to the right:

- To receive a document that lists their rights, and a verbal explanation of those rights
- To be placed in foster homes with their siblings, whenever possible
- To visit and maintain contact with siblings and receive assistance with transportation
- To have a sibling visit and contact plan that has been developed with their active engagement and participation and is followed while they are in care
- To be told why they cannot live with, talk to or see their siblings if they are not able to

## HOW CAN YOU HELP PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN SIBLING CONNECTIONS? BE CREATIVE!

Caseworkers	Foster Parents, Adoptive Parents and Guardians	Attorneys and Advocates	Community Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When siblings cannot be placed in the same home, keep them in close distance of each other</li> <li>• Rethink the idea of visits! They should feel casual and natural</li> <li>• Ensure the siblings have contact between visits</li> <li>• Frequently re-evaluate any barriers to joint placement and the appropriateness of sibling contact</li> <li>• Post the children as a sibling group on adoption bulletins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be open to sibling groups of varying ages and genders</li> <li>• Be understanding of typical sibling behaviors</li> <li>• Build relationships with the foster parents of your child's siblings</li> <li>• Take turns hosting sibling visits such as trips to the park, sleep overs, day trips and celebrations; also consider enrolling siblings together in sports and activities</li> <li>• Reach out to your support network for help</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to ask about the efforts made to place siblings together and address barriers to sibling contact</li> <li>• Ask about the frequency and quality of visits and ongoing contact</li> <li>• Offer to help the children ask for changes in the sibling visit and contact plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a foster or adoptive parent</li> <li>• Become a respite provider to help give foster parents a chance to recharge</li> <li>• Volunteer at your local DHS office to help with transportation for visits</li> <li>• Educate your friends and family on the need for supportive homes for siblings living in foster care</li> </ul>

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE RESOURCES?

- Camp to Belong Oregon is a program that reunites brothers and sisters living in separate homes for events of fun and sibling connection. They provide weeklong summer camp programs and one day events around the state.
- Department funding is available for adoption and guardianship mediation regarding contact and visits with siblings, parents and other relatives.

To see the Oregon Foster Children's Sibling Bill of Rights poster, visit <https://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Server/ce0262.pdf>.

IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP, I CAN ASK AN ADULT I TRUST OR CALL THE FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN AT YOUTH, EMPOWERMENT AND SAFETY (Y.E.S), 1-855-840-6036 OR [FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US](mailto:FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US).



# OREGON FOSTER CHILDREN'S SIBLING BILL OF RIGHTS I HAVE THE RIGHT:

- ★ To live with my brothers and sisters in foster care if possible
- ★ To have the adults in my life help me stay connected to my brothers and sisters if we are living or going to live in different families
- ★ To help make a plan about how I will see and talk to my brothers and sisters
- ★ To be told why I cannot live with, talk to or see my brothers and sisters if I am not able to



- ★ To have foster parents and caseworkers who know how important my brothers and sisters are to me
- ★ To be told if something changes with my brothers and sisters
- ★ To have my attorney tell the other adults in my life how I want to talk to and see my brothers and sisters



**IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP, I CAN ASK AN ADULT I TRUST OR CALL THE FOSTER CARE OMBUDSMAN AT YOUTH, EMPOWERMENT AND SAFETY (Y.E.S), 1-855-840-6036 OR FCO.INFO@STATE.OR.US.**



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