

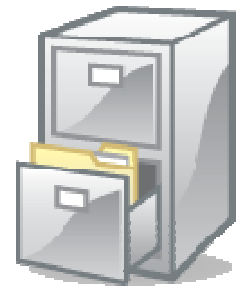
# YOUTH RIGHTS: PRIVACY FOR YOUTH IN CARE

## Who can see my child welfare records?

Information in your family case record is kept at the county child welfare agency. It can only be released to: your parents and their lawyers, your lawyer, the court, county executives, and you, if you are 14 or older (unless the judge county welfare agency thinks it would be harmful for you to see it). Your caseworker can also release this information (1) to a health care provider when it is needed for your treatment and (2) to a foster parent. The Resource Family Care Act allows some medical, behavioral, familial, and educational history from your family file to be released to your foster family so that they can take care of you. For anyone else to see the record, a judge would have to order it.

## Who can see my medical records?

If you are under 18, your parents will generally consent to your medical treatment and decide who gets to see the records. However, there is some treatment you can consent to without a parent or guardian. When YOU consent to the treatment, YOU control who gets to see the records. You can consent to: mental health treatment (if you are 14 or older), substance abuse treatment, birth control, treatment and testing for sexually transmitted diseases, treatment and testing for HIV, treatment related to pregnancy (except abortion). If you are being told you must share information you want to keep private, call your lawyer or the Juvenile Law Center at 1-800-875-8887.



## If I was adopted, can I see the adoption records?

Records related to an adoption are “sealed” and are very hard to see. If you are under 18, your adoptive parents can petition (ask) the court to see some parts of the adoption record. If you are 18 or older, you can petition the court to see parts of the record. If you want information about the identity or current location of your biological parents, the court will need to get your biological parents’ permission first. If you have questions about looking for your biological parents, you can call the Statewide Adoption Network helpline at 1-800-585-7926.



## Is the mail I send and receive confidential?

Yes. Your mail cannot be opened without your permission. There is only one exception. If the county children and youth agency has reason to believe that you are being sent something harmful or something that you are not allowed to have (contraband), they can open it in front of you. In this case, you should be told why your mail is being opened. If you do not understand or agree, talk with your caseworker and lawyer.

## Can my room and belongings be searched?

You have a right to be protected from “unreasonable search and seizure” in your placement facility. Facilities can only conduct searches when they have a concrete reason to suspect you have something harmful or something that you are not allowed to have (contraband). Every placement facility should have a search and seizure policy. You should ask to see that policy so you understand your rights.

Juvenile  
Law  
Center