

YOUTH RIGHTS: GETTING AND CHANGING PLACEMENTS FOR YOUTH IN CARE

Where will I be placed when I am in substitute care?

All efforts should be made to help you return home to your parents. If you cannot return home, you are entitled to be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like setting available. Your relatives should be notified within 30 days of you coming into care so that they can be given an opportunity to care for you.

As you get older, you may be placed in a Transitional Living Placement (TLP) or a Supervised Independent Living (SIL) placement. In these placements you get more responsibility and freedom and a greater chance to practice your independent living skills.

Will I be placed with my siblings in substitute care?

A new law, Fostering Connections to Success Act, requires that reasonable efforts now be made to place siblings in foster care together unless the safety or well-being of either sibling would be at risk by a joint placement. If siblings are not placed together because of safety or well-being reasons, frequent visitation and on-going contact must occur.

Do I get a say about where I am placed?

YES. Your voice, along with the voices of others, should be considered. You should always let your case worker, lawyer, judge, and anyone else involved in your case know where you want to be placed and what type of placement you think is best for you. You might know someone who you can live with, like a godparent, family friend, or teacher, who others are not aware of. You need to SPEAK UP!



What can I do if I want my placement to change?

If you are being mistreated in your placement, you should tell someone immediately so things can change for the better. Wherever you are placed, you should always be treated with respect, have your needs met and you should always feel safe. Youth should never be verbally or physically abused in their placements.

If you feel like your placement is not right for you or that you would do better in another type of placement, you should let someone know. Sometimes your placement can be changed.

What does it take to be a foster parent?

There are many requirements to being a foster parent. Foster parents must submit to criminal background checks, yearly home inspections, evaluations and training. Most importantly, foster parents must be able to provide a caring and nurturing environment for youth. They must make sure the youth's health, mental health, independent living, and educational needs are met. The money foster parents receive should be used for your housing, food, clothes and activities. In some situations, it may be used for your allowance—but that is up to the county and the foster parent.

Are there requirements for group homes, institutions, and transitional living facilities?

YES. These facilities must be licensed. To be licensed, these facilities must have enough qualified staff, meet requirements about safety and submit to yearly inspections. Staff must treat you with respect and cannot physically discipline you. They must provide for your treatment, educational, and safety needs in addition to providing you a place to live.

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