

# YOUTH RIGHTS: TEEN PARENTS WHO ARE IN CARE

## What rights do I have as a teen parent in care (foster care, kinship care, group homes, residential treatment facilities)?

- The right to physical and legal custody of your baby. (Your child should not be found dependent just because you are in care.)
- The right to parent your child.
- The right to live in the most family-like setting available.
- The right to visitation if you are not living with your child.
- The right to an attorney to represent you as a parent (if the child welfare agency files a petition to have your baby found dependent)

**These rights are the same for teen mothers and teen fathers!**



## Will my baby live with me?

All efforts should be made to place you with your baby. If you and your baby are not placed together, talk to your lawyer.

## What types of services can my child and I receive?

All efforts should be made to keep you and your child with your family or place you in the most family-like setting. You should also receive any Independent Living (IL) services your county provides. Because you are now a parent, you should also receive parenting support, instruction, and assistance in getting child care.

## How do I get child care?

The county child welfare agency or private provider agency should help you apply for or provide child care for your child. Many teen parents will qualify for subsidized child care. To determine if you are eligible and find out where to apply, contact the Child Care Works Hotline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or Child Care Information Services at 1-800-392-3131. If you are out of care and receiving welfare (TANF) or food stamps, check with your welfare caseworker to find out if you are eligible for child care assistance through your local welfare office.

## What is child support and how do I apply for it?



Child support is money paid by the parent who does not live with the child, paid to the parent who does live with the child. You can file for child support at your county's domestic relations court. Your caseworker, lawyer, or TANF caseworker can help you file. If you are out of care and receiving TANF, you may not receive the money or you may only receive \$50. In that case, the rest goes to reimburse the state for the cost of your benefits.

## Can I be asked to pay child support when I am in care?

Yes. Just like teen parents have many of the rights of older parents, they also have some of the same responsibilities. You can be ordered to pay child support if you are in care and even if you are still in high school.