

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## Quick Reference Guide

This quick reference guide highlights the key rights that your peers from the Youth Advisory Board consider essential for you to be aware of. Understanding your rights is a crucial aspect of advocating for yourself. Familiarity with your rights enhances your knowledge of the system and empowers you to advocate for yourself more effectively. To access the full Know Your Rights Guide please click on the link.

[FULL GUIDE](#)



**YAB**  
PA  
YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

Juvenile  
Law Center

### **In substitute care, you are entitled to:**

- The right to services that will help you stay with or return to your family.
- The right to the most family-like and least restrictive placement.
- The right to visitation. This includes visits with parents, siblings, family members, and other supports that are important to you.
  - For reasonable efforts to be made so you can be placed with your siblings.
  - If you are not placed with your siblings, to visit with your siblings (if they are in care) at least once every two weeks.
  - To visit with your parents at least once every two weeks.
- The right to not have family visits used as a reward or a punishment for your behavior.
- The right to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

- The right to be free from corporal punishment and any form of discrimination based on race, religion, disability, national origin, or gender.
  - This includes punishment that uses physical force, threats, or verbal abuse.
- The right to file a grievance or complaint with the placement agency or the child welfare agency when you feel you have been mistreated or your rights are being violated.
  - To have the grievance policy of the county and private provider agency explained to you in a way you can understand. You have the right to receive information in the way that you best understand, including documents in your primary language.
- The right to mental, medical, dental, and substance use care as appropriate. You also have the right to consent to certain medical care as well.

### **Regarding planning for your future**

- If you discharge from care and are still under age 21, you can re-enter foster care. However, you must meet the following criteria;
  - You discharged when you were 17 and 9 months or older
  - You are still under age 21 and
  - You are engaging in one of the activities that would qualify you for extended foster care. (Please see list in next section.)
- The right to be engaged in planning and decision making.
  - To an Individual Service Plan (ISP) and Child Permanency Plan (CPP) that explain your goals and needs and what is being done to meet them, including your responsibilities. To be present and participate in all the meetings where these plans are created and discussed.
  - To a detailed transition plan at least 6 months prior to your 18th birthday before you leave care (at age 18 or older) that reflects your individual needs and includes specific options on housing, health insurance, education, local opportunities for mentors and continuing support services, and work force supports and employment services.
- The right to aftercare services until your 23rd birthday.

### **Can I stay in care after age 18?**

- You are allowed to stay in care up to your 21st birthday if you are doing any of the following:
  - Completing a high school degree or an equivalent program.
  - Participant in a program that helps you get a job.
  - Employed 80 hours per month.
  - Cannot do any of the activities listed above due to a documented behavioral health or medical condition.